

Lulu Joy metac.



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A FIGHT FOR A WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEETING.

THE scene of this deadly encounter was neither gloomy nor romantic ; it was fair and pastoral ; and the time was May ; and all the sweet influences of the spring-time were shedding a soft idyllic sweetness over our English dales. We had with us at this time a young American lady, who was on her first visit to the country ; and one evening, when various plans were being proposed for her amusement and edification, one of us said to her :

“ Now, wouldn't you rather get away from London, and go straight down into one of our quiet valleys, and see a real old English town that has been slumbering there for many centuries, and is likely to sleep for as many more ? You will see a strange

old place, with quaint houses of red and white, and here and there a garden between the gables. Then you will go down to the side of a broad and smooth river, flowing by under some beautiful woods. You will live in an old-fashioned inn—called the ‘Complete Angler’—and just outside your window you will see the smooth blue river break white over a long weir, and you will see the trees, and lawn, and the veranda of the miller’s house on the other side ; and beyond that again the soft low hills and hanging woods of one of our English counties.”

Our young friend was much pleased with the notion ; but hesitated. Of course, she said, this quiet and beautiful place must be far away and difficult to reach. When she was told that it was something less than fifty miles from London, she at once agreed to go ; and hence it was that the desperate conflict which I have to describe, took place in one of the most peaceful nooks of Berkshire, at a time of the year when the human bosom should have been full, not of angry passions, but of the singing of the nightingales.

For this was the secret of it—two men had overheard this proposal ; and each of them had inwardly resolved to outwit the other by immediately tele-

graphing to the "Complete Angler" for rooms, so that he should be installed there when this young lady and ourselves, her guardians for the time, should arrive. One of them was a slender young gentleman, fair-haired, large-eyed, and rather petulant in manner, who had just made some stir in literary circles by the publication of a volume of metaphysical verse ; the other was considerably his elder, inclined to be stout, comely of face, and made welcome among us chiefly by a sort of sly good-humor which sometimes ed him into saying good things, but in any case and at all times seemed to make him very well contented with himself. This Mr. Humphreys was understood by some to be in a Government office ; but no one could ever precisely say what it was, and his duties certainly never interfered with his pleasures. His rival, who had the privilege of being styled by the Court newsman the Honorable Philip Sturmere Maurice, was the youngest son of an impecunious nobleman, and was believed to be waiting for some colonial appointment.

Now, these two men, from the moment that our pretty Amy Newton came among us, began to pay her a series of more or less occult attentions, all in a friendly sort of way, of course, and generally

through the small and gentle lady who was her hostess. By this means they could present her with boxes for the opera, they could lend her new books, they could even offer to escort herself and her two companions to an exhibition of pictures. All this was smooth sailing. Little did we perceive in it the elements of a tragedy. The young lady accepted these marks of friendliness with a sweet impartiality; doubtless they were merely little acts of courtesy extended to a stranger from a distant land.

And of the young American lady herself? Well, she was neither very wise nor very learned; but she was exceedingly pretty, and she had a curiously winning and fascinating manner that drew women as well as men toward her. Perhaps it was the softness of her voice; perhaps it was a kind of piteous look in her dark grey eyes; but anyhow, people liked to get near her, and when they got near her they got interested in her, and when they got interested in her they immediately went and asked everybody else what was her story. No one present knew. It was supposed to be rather a painful affair—had she not been engaged to be married to a young man who was drowned within sight of shore, Paul and Virginia fashion?—but in any case she always referred

to it in a vague way, and apparently wished to keep her sorrow a secret. For the rest, Miss Amy was rather tall and pale ; she wore a good many rings, and when she travelled she displayed to the other inhabitants of the railway-carriage a bag filled with all sorts of curiosities in the way of scents and other toilet requisites. One might have laughed at the fashion in which she played with these ; only she was so pretty and child-like one had not the heart to laugh at her. She seemed only to pet herself because everybody else petted her.

We drove to Paddington Station. There was a young man there, looking furtively up and down the platform. He came to us and said, with an amount of confusion in his face that seemed to make him a trifle sulky :

“ Oh, are you going into the country ? Really ! What beautiful weather ! I took it suddenly into my head to run down to see Marlow—it must be looking so pretty just now.”

Miss Newton said nothing at all, though she seemed surprised ; but the small lady beside her—who manages all such things with an infinite tact and discretion—smiled demurely, and remarked :

“ What an odd coincidence ! We are going to

Marlow also. We shall make quite a little party—how very nice !”

When once the awkwardness of the meeting was over, Mr. Maurice was apparently highly delighted with his good fortune ; and he did his best all the way down to make himself an agreeable companion, taking care to address himself mostly to the elder lady. You would have fancied that he meant to leave to me all the talk with our pretty Miss Amy ; those young men are so transparently cunning.

Well, we got down at length to the small country station, and here there was a humble carriage in waiting to drive us to the river-side. We passed along through the sweet-smelling fields. We drove through the quaint little town, which was all shining now in the warm light of the evening sun. We passed the church and got down to the bridge, and there before us, on the other side of the stream, stood the old-fashioned inn of red brick amidst its trim plots of flowers and shrubs.

“Did you ever see anything more beautiful ?” Queen Tita says ; and, indeed, it would be difficult to compose a prettier picture than we beheld at this moment—the solitary, quaint, red old building by the side of the river, the smooth water reflecting the

drooping trees, the white line of the weir, and behind all these some rich meadows leading over to a low rampart of hills, the thick woods on which were burning red in the sunset.

It was, in truth, a peaceful spot, and we drove over the bridge, and round and down to the inn, with something of a notion that here, for a space, we should shut out all the cares and stormy passions of the world, and dream ourselves back into a condition of primeval peace and innocence. We got down from the carriage. The solitary waiter was at the door to receive us. We hoped that we should be the only occupants of the famous old hostelry.

Just at this moment the face of the young gentleman who had come with us was observed to change color, and a most unchristian gleam of anger shot from his eyes. Who was this blithe and buxom person who, dressed in a fishing-costume of gray, came gayly along the passage, and seemed overwhelmed with amazement and joy at seeing us?

"What?" said he, "can it be possible? Bless my soul, now! What a fortunate thing! But who could have dreamed of meeting you here, of all places in this sinful but delightful world?"

Who, indeed? It has been the lot of the present

writer to have been present at dramatic performances in the capitals of various countries, but he has never witnessed a more beautiful piece of acting than that which was performed by a stout and middle-aged gentleman on the threshold of an inn in Berkshire. We were very nearly imposed on. For the moment it almost seemed real. But then our common sense came to the rescue ; and we knew that this sly old dog had quietly slipped down here and taken up his quarters in anticipation of our coming, while the most we could hope for was that the green and fertile plains of Berkshire might not be stained with blood before the week was out.



CHAPTER II.

THREATS.

HEY behaved themselves pretty well at dinner. We dined together in the coffee-room, a queer, low-roofed old place, with an abundance of windows looking out on the river, and with colored pictures of the Thames hung round the walls. The ~~only~~ other occupant of the room was an austere and elderly maiden lady, dining all by herself, of whom Mr. Humphreys rather cruelly remarked that, considering the number of leap-years she must have seen, it was curious she had not taken advantage of any one of them. On this Mr. Maurice rather indignantly retorted that there were certain spectacles which deserved sympathy rather than ridicule ; and we all agreed with that sentiment. The incident passed by. No bones were broken.

After dinner we went outside ; there was still some

warm color in the sky, and the smooth river caught a faint glow as it stole away under the dark green trees. The woods were quiet now; in the twilight there was no sound but the soft rushing of the water over the weir; one began to wish that these young people might sing in the gathering darkness, down here by the side of the rushes. They were thinking of other things.

"Of course, Miss Newton," says the taller and younger of the two gentlemen, "you will go for an excursion on the river to-morrow? The fact is, a man I know has put a little toy steamer at my disposal—it is down at Cookham just now—I could have it up here for you at any hour you chose."

"A steamer?" says our young American friend; "what a shame it would be to bring a steamer into this quiet place!"

The barometer of the young man's face falls ten degrees; that of his rival jumps up a hundred.

"And that isn't the worst of it," says Mr. Humphreys, eagerly. "Oh, no, not at all. The joys of a trip in a small river steamer are most multifarious. First you run aground. Then your waves upset a skiff, and the two men in it make use of the most awful language. Then you take off somebody's out-

rigger. And so on, and so on, until you wish you had never been born ; and, indeed, when you go ashore, your own mother wouldn't believe you ever had been, for your identity is completely lost and smothered up in the coal-dust that has been showered on you. No, no, Miss Newton, don't be a— I mean, don't you go in a river steamer. Now, if you really want to enjoy the river, I'll show you how. We shall get a big flat punt and moor it out below the weir, and we shall have luncheon on board, and plenty of books, and a box of water-colors. If you like to sit and read, well. If you like to spin for trout you can have my line. If you want to sketch, you have all the scenery about you. Now that is how you ought to spend a nice, idling, enjoyable day on the Thames."

Mr. Humphreys was quite pleased with this burst of oratory. "Do you like the picture?" he might have asked, in the words of the romantic Claude Melnotte. And she did like the picture. She said it was charming. She hoped we should have that boat.

"And the water-colors?" said Mr. Maurice, with something of a sneer. "Where do you propose to get them about here?"

"I brought them with me," replied his rival, with a certain majestic calm.

"Oh, do you paint, Mr. Humphreys?" Miss Amy said directly.

"No, Miss Newton, I don't. But I knew you did, and so I brought the colors."

It was not for a second or two that any of us observed how this unblushing person had tripped. He had brought colors for her. But had he not vowed and sworn that he was never so surprised in his life as when he saw that carriage drive up to the door of the "Complete Angler?"

"Perhaps you brought with you the trout for which Miss Newton is to fish!" said the younger man, with a ghastly grin on his face.

"Oh, dear, no. There are good trout about here."

"Never saw any."

"Perhaps not—not at the end of your own line, anyway. But if you will take the trouble to look through *Land and Water* for April, 1873, you will find a description of a trout taken here which turned the scale at six pounds—there?"

"And the happy fisherman?"

"Was your humble servant."

Now, whether this was true or not,

say ; for files of *Land and Water* are not as common in the country as buttercups. The bold assertion however, scored one for Mr. Humphreys, and pretty nearly put the finishing touch to his rival's resentment and chagrin. We began to wonder when these two would rush at each other.

"Now, young people," said the lady who looks after us all, "don't keep lounging about the river-side, or you will get chilled. You must all go off for a short walk before bed-time, all except myself. I am going indoors to unpack."

In one moment the young man had darted forward. He would show Miss Newton the shortest way round to the road. Was it not a delightful evening for a stroll?—and how differer'ly situated one was in the country?

Humphreys and I walked after these two, and our light-hearted friend was most uncommonly morose. Sometimes he whistled ; but that form of gayety sounded strangely in the silence of the evening. He had his eyes fixed on the two figures before him, and kept pretty close upon them.

So very still and calm was the evening that we could not but overhear what Miss Amy and her companion were talking about. Perhaps the silence

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and the strange twilight over the woods had somewhat impressed them ; but, at all events, they were speaking in rather a sad way of the occurrences of life, and of the fashion in which hopes sprang up only to be destroyed by a ruthless fate, and of the sympathy that was so valuable in healing these wounds, and that was so rarely to be met with. Young Maurice had a gentle and pleasant voice ; he was talking in an undertone ; these two, as they walked together along the quiet country road, looked very like lovers.

My companion whistled another bar of "The Minstrel Boy," and then began to yawn.

"I think I shall go back and have a cigar before going to bed," said he.

"Very well," said I.

"But you don't mean to leave those two walking on by themselves?" said he, sharply. "Why, that long-legged idiot would go stalking on to the crack of doom—till he tumbled over the edge of the universe. Call him back. Does he want to drag the girl to the shores of the German Ocean?"

I called them ; they turned and met us ; and there was for a moment a little confusion. Mr. Humphreys was equal to the occasion. He immediately said to

her, "Oh, Miss Newton, I want to tell you what you must do about to-morrow," and then, before the poor girl knew where she was, he had walked her off, and deposited the wrathful and fuming Maurice with me. It was a pleasant walk back to the inn—one's companion being a young man whose chief desire was to dispatch somebody or other on a voyage to another world.

"Now," said the genial Mr. Humphreys to me that night, when he had lighted his second cigar and mixed his parting glass, "now that that spindle-shanked giraffe has gone to bed, I will tell you all that happened as we came back this evening. By Jove, what a sweet and engaging creature that girl is—what a fine thing it would be to have to take her about always—to picture exhibitions, you know, where your friends were—to dinner-parties, drums, and all that; and then, when you were tired, to take a run down to this quiet little spot and have a good time all by yourselves. She is a little taller than I am, to be sure—"

"I thought you were going to tell me a story."

"Ah, yes. Well, no sooner had we started to walk home than I found that that milk-faced wisp of straw had been making the girl wretched by talking

of troubles and misfortune and the sympathy of unhappy people with each other. Now, you know, that an't my line ; and I didn't see the fun of it ; and says I to myself. ' Just let's see what this girl is really unhappy about ! ' You know, not one of you would tell me——”

“ Surely it was not our business, even if we had known ! ”

“ ‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ dear Miss Newton, I hear you have been rather unhappy.’ She sighed at this. Then I went on to tell her that it was very impertinent of me to ask about her private affairs, but she must excuse the interest which I, in common with every body else, felt in her ; and would she tell me something of the young gentleman who was lost ? ”

“ Well,” said the attentive listener, “ if cheek has any buoyancy about it, there's no fear of your drowning.”

“ Oh, my dear fellow,” remarked the complacent gentleman in gray, with a quiet grin on his face, “ I know how to treat one of your very sentimental girls. She told me at once. He was her cousin. I said his being drowned must have been a great shock to her : and she said that was so ; and yet she didn't seem to make much of it. So I said that people

sometimes exaggerated the concern you ought to have in your relations ; and that there were cousins and cousins. She said that was true, almost in a cheerful voice ; and admitted that she did not know much about the young man. ‘I suppose,’ said I, ‘that your relatives rather looked forward to your marrying him as a sort of family affair—you know what I mean?’ She said that was so, too ; and added, ‘Poor young man!’ Now, I’ll tell you honestly I had come by this time not to believe in the depth of her misery about the elegant young gentleman who was supposed to play Paul in her Virginia ; and I ventured to hint as much. She was not offended. In fact, she grew quite lively and was rather inclined to poke fun at my curiosity, which she said was the thing that Americans were blamed for. ‘But what was he like?’ said I, wanting to see what she really felt about that hero of a sentimental past. Would you believe it—would you believe it,—sir? she never even saw him! Moreover, it wasn’t in coming to see her that he was drowned. Why, bless you, I laughed ; then she was hurt, and said that the drowning of any body was not a thing to be ridiculed ; to which I assented with such eagerness that we immediately became very good friends again.

Silent sorrows! Why, sir, I will undertake to have her skipping about like a lamb in a couple of days! Regrets, and buried affections, and sympathy?—you won't see much more of that sort of stuff! As for that two yards' length of attenuated dumpling, I will duck him in the river if he tries to stuff her head full of such trash—I will—I will, indeed. Let that young man beware!"

With this, the truculent fellow tossed the end of his cigar into the fire-place, just as if he had been heaving his rival into the Thames; and then he went off determined to have a good sleep to prepare him for the great events of the morrow.



CHAPTER III.

THE RIVAL SUITORS.



AS she conscious of the interneine war which was raging in this peaceful spot, and of which she was obviously the cause?

We met the young lady next morning just as she was going down stairs to breakfast. She looked the very impersonation of all gentleness and innocence and good-nature. If angry passions were raging elsewhere, she, at least, preserved a cheerful serenity of mind.

Doubtless these two gentlemen had both got up very early, on the chance of having a little quiet talk with her if she happened to be taking the morning air. Doubtless, too, they had enjoyed each other's society for an hour or two before breakfast ; they were both looking rather impatient when we went down.

" Oh, Miss Newton, may I give you these flowers ?"

said Mr. Maurice, bringing forward a very pretty little nose-gay of wild blossoms, which he had himself culled from the meadows and hedges.

"Thank you very much," said she, and he looked very pleased and proud. "And thank you, too, Mr. Humphreys, for the charming bouquet you sent me this morning. It was so kind of you."

Every body stared ; every body except that stout and placid Machiavelli, on whose impassive face not even one smile of triumph appeared. But how had he contrived to get and send her a bouquet at such an hour ? He must have got the flowers overnight. He must have lain in wait for the maid, taking up hot water to Miss Newton's room, and bribed her to carry the bouquet and a little message at the same time. Now, a man whose attentions to a young lady begin before breakfast—who sends her a bouquet along with her hot water—means something serious.

"And now, Miss Newton," said this bold person, already asserting a sort of guardianship over her, "what are we to do to-day ? Shall we make up a party ? The morning is beautiful—the chestnuts, the red hawthorn, the laburnum, are all most lovely—and as for the river, you will be delighted when you go outside."

Miss Amy made no answer, but looked to us, her proper guardians.

"I am quite sure, Miss Newton," said Mr. Maurice, in a sort of scornful way, "you'll soon get heartily sick of sitting in a fisherman's punt, doing nothing but watch some one else trying to catch fish that aren't there. I don't believe they've even got here that wooden fish that the landlords in some places moor deep down in the water so as to get people to come and fish for it. I suppose you've heard that fisherman after fisherman comes in and swears the fish made a rush at his fly—more likely in the case of a wooden fish than of a real one, I should say. You've heard what Dr. Johnson—"

"You needn't," said the elder lover, with a sudden fierceness—"you needn't take Miss Newton back to the time of Dr. Johnson for pedantry, stupidity, and rudeness. There is plenty of all three going about in our own day."

Miss Newton looked alarmed, and said, gently, "I shouldn't at all mind looking at some one fishing. I don't know how it is done in English rivers."

"Oh, thank you," said Mr. Humphreys, getting quite cheerful again; "but don't you imagine we

are going to victimize you. Oh, no ; what you must see, first of all, is the beautiful scenery about here. We can drive from here to the Duke of Westminster's place at Cliefden, then on to Maidenhead Bridge and Taplow, then on to Burnham Beeches, and back again another way. And I have a wagonette coming at eleven for you."

And at eleven o'clock sure enough, there was the wagonette standing at the door, and the whole of us submissively went out as if we had been taken possession of by this indefatigable government official. But how were we to sit ?

"I say, Maurice," Humphreys remarked, in a careless way, "I think you said you knew the country about here?"

"Oh, very well, indeed," said the unsuspecting victim ; "I know every inch of it."

"Then perhaps you wouldn't mind sitting beside the driver, and telling him where he ought to take us ? Wouldn't that be the best way, Miss Newton?"

To appeal to her—it was cruel. She said something very timidly in reply, and the young man with black rage in his heart, got up beside the driver. When the ladies were not looking Humphreys wink-

ed to me ; but I could not encourage familiarity on the part of so unscrupulous a person.

Our young friend had certainly a favorable opportunity that morning for making the acquaintance of certain sorts of our English scenery in their most charming aspects. We drove through pleasant country lanes, the hedgebanks of which were brilliant with spring flowers ; we passed through tiny villages, and the cottage gardens were smothered in blossoms ; we came upon glimpses of the blue river flowing smoothly through rich meadows which were white with daisies ; and then, again, through an opening in the trees, we could see the higher land beyond, with the Cliefden woods, rich with the foliage of the early summer. Miss Amy was indeed delighted ; and the driving through the fresh air had brought a color to her cheeks and a light to her eyes which rendered her more than usually pretty. Then she was most friendly with Mr. Humphreys ; for somehow or other he had put the notion in her head that all this was his doing, and she was grateful to him for every beautiful thing she saw. You would have thought he had planted those red chestnut-trees (three hundred years before) in anticipation of her coming.

"And really, Miss Newton, you must not go away from England without seeing far more of it. Why should you go with your parents to Paris? Your other two sisters are quite sufficient society for them. Paris! It is the most miserable city in the world to spend a holiday in. The white glare and heat of the streets will blind you. You will lose all the health you have acquired here, and begin to get head-aches, and feel drowsy, and disgusted with the whole of creation. Now, how long did you say your parents meant to stay in Paris before going back to America?"

"Three months."

"Then," said he, promptly, "you stay with our good friends here for that time. They will be delighted to have you, I know; and by-and-by they will be going down into Surrey, where you will see quite another sort of scenery, and see something of our English country life. You will, won't you?"

The audacity of this person was remarkable. Of course we had to press Miss Amy to stay; and although we did so honestly, one generally wishes to have one's offers of hospitality proceed from one's self. However, Mr. Humphreys seemed calmly to

ignore all such little prejudices. He told Miss Newton what she could expect by giving up the trip to Paris and staying with us. He gave her a description of Box Hill and Mickleham Downs which would have been worthy of the poet Thompson or of George Robins, the auctioneer. The girl, of course, could not promise; but she was apparently well inclined toward the proposal, and said she would see what her parents said when they came back from Edinburgh. All this, be it observed, was overheard by the young man sitting up in front; what he thought of it can only be imagined, for he maintained a morose and rigid silence.

"You see, my dear Miss Newton," remarked our gay friend, "you must do unto others as you would be done by. Now I mean to give America three full months—"

"Oh, are you coming over?" the girl said, her whole face inadvertently lighting up.

"Oh, yes," he answered in his off-hand way. "I have long purposed it. Now I shall do it—in the autumn. When do you say your papa will probably be going back?"

"About the beginning of September," she said; and then she added, quite unguardedly, "and what

a pleasant thing it would be if we happened to find you in the same steamer ! ”

“ Well,” said he, sagely, “ I have generally found that a man should never leave such things to chance. It is better to play the good genius for yourself. According, I think that if you go over to America in the beginning of September, and if you would kindly let me know the name of the steamer, you may pretty confidently reckon on finding me—you may call it by chance if you like—among the passengers.”

“ Oh, and we could introduce you to so many nice people—mamma would be most delighted to do so. But do you really mean to go over ? ”

“ I give you my word of honor,” said he, “ that if you will tell me what steamer you go back to America by, I shall go by that steamer too, and take a three months’ holiday in the States. Is that explicit ? or shall I put the terms of the contract in writing ? ”

Now, an extraordinary incident occurred at this moment. Humphreys, with an amiable smile on his face, suddenly called out.

“ I say, Maurice, it must be uncommonly slow for you up there. Come on in here, and I’ll change places with you.”

Could a more courteous offer have been made? The young man refused sulkily. Then he was pressed ; and at last he consented. Mr. Humphreys got up beside the driver ; and presently we heard him begin to chaff that serious person in a fashion which brought many a smile to Miss Amy's lips. She was evidently listening more to him than to us.

We drove up and through the beautiful woods of Cliefden, the birds singing all around us, the white clouds sailing through the blue overhead. We drove on to Burnham Beeches, and there, in the midst of the forest, saw the great gnarled and twisted gray trunks, to which even the least imaginative of Londoners make pious pilgrimages. We drove back to Maidenhead Bridge, and had luncheon at the inn there, and went down to the river and wandered about for an hour ; then we got into the wagonette again and set out for Marlow. All this time the most patient and winning efforts of Queen Tita were ineffectual in smoothing down the savage feelings of the young man who sat beside us.

"There is nothing," he said to Miss Amy, "which vexes me so much as a show of coarse joviality and plow-boy wit when one is in the midst of beautiful scenery. A day like this reminds you of many

things you had half forgotten ; and when these associations are present to the mind, painful and sad as many of them may be, it is not pleasant to be shocked by an impertinent jocularitv. Don't you think so ? ”

“ But why should a pretty piece of country make you sad ? ” she said, quite naturally and cheerfully. “ It ought to raise one's spirits. ’

He said no more after that ; and indeed a silent person is apt to be overlooked if he have four companions all sufficiently talkative. That young man was losing ground.





CHAPTER IV.

THE CHALLENGE.

WHEN we got back to Marlow the two ladies went indoors; we three strolled round to the meadows by the side of the river. I did not at all like the look of the young man's face: there was mischief brooding.

"I suppose," said he to me, in rather a loud and ostentatious fashion, "that Miss Newton is under your care?"

"She is for the present."

"And how do you like," he continued, in the same loud fashion, "her making an assignation to be accompanied to America by a gentleman who has only been casually introduced to her parents, and of whom neither she nor they know any thing?"

"If you mean me, young gentleman," said Mr. Humphreys, ceasing to whistle 'Love's Young Dream,' "I'd advise you to be a little more respectful."

"Age commands respect, certainly," said the younger man, with an unmistakable sneer.

"Yes, and school-boys, when they don't show it get whipped," remarked the other, beginning to whistle again.

"I'll tell you what it is," exclaimed Maurice, turning fiercely round, "I'll tell you what my opinion is, that a man who tries to entrap a young girl into a clandestine appointment, and without the knowledge of her parents, and he old enough to be her father, is no better than a cad—I said cad, sir."

"Oh, did you? Did you, really?" said Mr. Humphreys.

Now there is an operation which, in the vulgar tongue, is known as "ballooning," and which consists in seizing a person from behind by the collar of his coat and by another portion of his attire, and driving him on before you. A person who is thus "ballooned" is very helpless; he may squeal, or use bad language, or try to kick, but on he must go. Well, no sooner had Mr. Maurice uttered these last words than Mr. Humphreys immediately laid hold of him in the manner above described, and began to run him down the slope of the meadows to the side of the river. The younger man did squeal—with absolute rage—he did use bad language, and with might and main struggled to get free. His enemy—with a shout of

demoniacal laughter which rang through the place—held him firm, and drove him right down to the stream. The whole affair had taken place so quickly that there was no chance of interference, and it was **all over in a second.**

For, as it happened, there was a log of wood lying concealed among the grass by the river's side ; Maurice, tripping over it, stumbled and fell headlong into the water ; while Humphreys, stumbling also, but having proper warning, fell, but managed to save himself from going into the stream. The next minute Maurice had scrambled out again through the rushes, dripping from head to heel, and trying to get his wet hair out of his eyes. His hat was quietly floating down the Thames.

His rival stood firm. I fully expected to be the unwilling witness of a combat like that which the lover of Helen of Kirkconnell describes when, by the river's side, he drew his sword and hacked his rival "in pieces sma'." But the young man was a wise young man ; and who can fight with one's eyes blinded, and one's garments heavy with water ?

"You shall hear from me within an hour," said he, ominously, as he made for the garden of the inn,

by which way he had hoped to get in, unperceived, to the house.

Then ensued a strange and wild scene. The elderly gentleman tossed his wide-awake into the air. He caught it coming down, and kicked it a dozen yards out into the long grass. Then, with his hands in the air, he performed a savage dance of joy, snapping his fingers, and calling out :

“How hath the cheeky fallen! He hath been overcome and vanquished, utterly smote out and annihilated, scrunched up, and knocked into everlasting smithereens. My dear friend, shall we have a drink on the strength of this? ’Tis now the witching hour of half-past six, when he who loves his dinner might have a tiny glass of sherry-and-bit-*ters*—*nicht wahr?*”

His friend took a more sober view of the situation.

“The best thing you can do, Humphreys, is to compose your nerves with something else than sherry. You’ll have to fight that young man as soon as he gets dry clothes on—you may as well make up your mind to it.”

“And who’s afraid?” said he. “Who’s afraid of that sand-colored bell-rope—that elongated peli-

can—that indefinite length of Sydenham trowsers and shirt-collar? Bah! I will explode him into the primeval elements; I will twist him round the trunk of a tree, and people will mistake him in the morning for a snake that has died of a bilious attack.”



CHAPTER V.

THE DUEL.



IN a very short space of time young Maurice came out again, dressed in another suit of clothes. He went past us rapidly without speaking. We saw him cross the bridge and go into the town.

"Now what is he up to?" said Mr. Humphreys, a trifle more serious.

"He is either gone to get a policeman to give you in charge for assault, or to get a pair of pistols at an iron monger's."

"Pistols?" said Mr. Humphreys, contemptuously; "that would be like the lunatic."

And it was; for a few moments after, Mr. Maurice returned, and coming up to his rival, firmly and courteously informed him that he meant to fight him; that he did not think he would have a fair chance in a vulgar boxing-match, but that he had bought a pair of pistols with which they could settle their quarrel in the adjoining meadow. Mr. Humphreys

listened with a laugh on his face ; then he saw it was no good making a joke about it, and finally, stung by a chance remark of his opponent, he said, "All right ; come along !"

Now what was the third person who was the spectator of all this folly to do ? The whole affair seemed so incredible that to call any one's attention to it might have been compromising ; and yet, to all appearances, these two were really going down to the side of the river to load these pistols and fire them at each other.

"I thought," said I, to them both, "that when gentlemen in France went out to fire half-loaded weapons at each other they generally took with them a doctor to make believe the thing was serious. Don't you mean to have a doctor, or any seconds, or any reporter to send a romantic account to the *Figaro* ?"

"We shall do very well by ourselves," said the younger man ; and the two imbeciles walked off.

There remained but one thing for me to do. In a certain chamber of that old-fashioned inn there was a lady dressing for dinner ; and when she is finally arranging the flowers in her hair she does not like to be disturbed. However, when I represented to her the deadly schemes of those two people whom

we could see walking down to the meadow, she quite forgot the last yellow rose-bud and caught at a light shawl which she threw around her head and shoulders.

“ Shall we tell them the truth ? ” said Tita.

“ What truth ? ” said I ; “ Only, whatever truth you have to tell them, you’d better look sharp.”

What a placid evening was shining all around when we hastened down to the river—the sweet-briar of the garden scenting the air, and the beautiful tints in the sky showing on the clear bosom of the Thames ! We could see those two black figures down by the tall green rushes. They had apparently settled the preliminaries, and were now some dozen yards apart.

“ They see us now — oh, the two gabies ! ” said my companion.

The notion of bringing a lady on the scene was obviously successful ; one could see each of them smuggling something away into his coat-pocket. When we arrived on the spot they were evidently contemplating the beauty of the scenery ; while Mr. Humphreys, with a charming carelessness, asked us if we had seen the rush of young fish to the surface—obviously getting out of the way of a pike.

"No, I did not," said Queen Tita, with a gracious smile. "I have been too busy thinking how I should scold you two gentlemen. What do you mean by going away by yourselves in this manner, instead of waiting in the garden until Miss Newton came down? You ought to pay her every attention while she is our guest; otherwise she will not think much of our English people, and she will have a bad account of us to give to Mr. St. Vincent."

"Mr. St. Vincent?" they both repeated, mechanically.

"Yes," was the innocent answer; "the gentleman whom she is to marry as soon as she returns home."

There was a strange pause. Mr. Humphrey began to stare about and whistle. The other gentleman looked uncomfortable and blushed hotly.

"But I shall forgive you if you come back to the inn at once," said their gentle monitress; "and indeed, dinner will be waiting for us in twenty minutes. You won't mind my running back by myself?"

When she had gone the two men looked at each other for a moment, and then young Maurice, with a contemptuous smile, tossed his pistol in among the reeds. Another splash told us that the second wea-

pon had followed it. Then they stood and looked at each other again.

"Look here, old chap," the elder gentleman said, in a bland fashion, "there isn't much use in making a fuss about this. I beg your pardon for any awkward little thing that *may* have occurred. When a man is made a fool of by a woman he's not responsible for his actions—what do you think?"

"I quite think so," said the other; and they shook hands amicably.

Next morning our two friends discovered that urgent business called them away to London, and they left us with many expressions of regret. It was remarked, moreover, by a certain gentle-eyed young lady, that no reference had been made to that compact about a trip to the United States.

WILLIAM BLACK.





DR. MARIGOLD.



AM a Cheap Jack, and my own father's name was Willum Marigold. It was in his lifetime supposed by some that his name was William, but my own father always consistently said, "No, it was Willum." On which point I contented myself with looking at the argument this way: If a man is not allowed to know his own name in a free country, how much is he allowed to know in a land of slavery? As to looking at the argument through the medium of the Register, Willum Marigold came into the world before Registers came up much,—and went out of it too. They wouldn't have been greatly in his line neither, if they had chanced to come up before him.

I was born on the Queen's highway, but it was

the King's at that time. A doctor was fetched to my own mother by my own father, when it took place on a common ; and in consequence of his being a very kind gentleman, and accepting no fee but a tea-tray, I was named Doctor, out of gratitude and compliment to him. There you have me, Doctor Marigold.

I am at present a middle-aged man of a broadish build, in cords, leggings, and a sleeved waistcoat, the strings of which is always gone behind. Repair them how you will, they go like fiddle-strings. You have been to the theatre, and you have seen one of the violin-players screw up his violin, after listening to it as if it had been whispering the secret to him that it feared it was out of order, and then you have heard it snap. That's as exactly similar to my waistcoat as a waistcoat and a violin can be like one another.

I am partial to a white hat, and I like a shawl round my neck worn loose and easy. Sitting down is my favorite posture. If I have a taste in point of personal jewelry, it is mother-of-pearl buttons. There you have me again, as large as life.

The doctor having accepted a tea-tray, you'll guess that my father was a Cheap Jack before me. You are right. He was. It was a pretty tray. It represented a large lady going along a serpentine up-hill

gravel walk to attend a little church. Two swans had likewise come astray with the same intentions. When I call her a large lady, I don't mean in point of breadth, for there she fell below my views, but she more than made it up in height ; her height and slinness was—in short *THE* height of both.

I often saw that tray, after I was the innocently smiling cause (or more likely screeching one) of the doctor's standing it on a table against the wall in his consulting-room. Whenever my own father and mother were in that part of the country, I used to put my head (I have heard my own mother say it was flaxen curls at that time, though you wouldn't know an old hearth-broom from it now till you come to the handle, and found it wasn't me) in at the doctor's door, and the doctor was always glad to see me, and said, " Aha, my brother practitioner ! Come in, little M. D. How are your inclinations as to sixpence ? "

You can't go on forever, you'll find, not yet could my father, nor yet could my mother. If you don't go off as a whole when you are about due, you're liable to get off in part, and two to one your head's the part. Gradually my father went off his, and my mother went off hers. It was in a harmless way, but it put out the family where I boarded them. The

old couple, though retired, got to be wholly and solely devoted to the Cheap Jack business, and were always selling the family off. Whenever the cloth was laid for dinner, my father began rattling the plates and dishes, as we do in our line when we put up crockery for a bid, only he had lost the trick of it, and mostly let 'em drop and broke 'em. As the old lady had been used to sit in the cart, and hand the articles out one by one to the old gentleman on the footboard to sell, just in the same way she handed him every item of the family's property, and they disposed of it in their own imaginations from morning to night. At last the old gentleman, lying bedridden in the same room with the old lady, cries out in the old patter, fluent, after having been silent for two days and nights : " Now here my jolly companions every one, —which the Nightingale club in a village was held, At the sign of the Cabbage and Shears, Where the singers no doubt would have greatly excelled, But for want of taste, voice and ears,—now, here, my jolly companions every one, is a working model of a used-up old Cheap Jack, without a tooth in his head, and with a pain in every bone ; so like life that it would be just as good if it wasn't better, just as bad if it wasn't worse, and just as new if it wasn't worn

out. Bid for the working model of the old Cheap Jack, who has drunk more gunpowder-tea with the ladies in his time than would blow the lid off a washerwoman's copper, and carry it as many thousands of miles higher than the moon as naught nix naught, divided by the national debt, carry nothing to the poor-rates, three under, and two over. Now, my hearts of oak and men of straw, what do you say for the lot? Two shillings, a shilling, tenpence, eightpence, sixpence, fourpence. Twopence? Who said twopence? The gentleman in the scarecrow's hat? I am ashamed of the gentleman in the scarecrow's hat. I really am ashamed of him for his want of public spirit. Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come! I'll throw you in a working model of a old woman that was married to the old Cheap Jack so long ago, that upon my word and honor it took place in Noah's Ark, before the Unicorn could get in to forbid the banns by blowing a tune upon his horn. There now! Come! What do you say for both? I'll tell you what I'll do with you I don't bear you malice for being so backward. Here! If you make me a bid that'll only reflect a little credit on your town, I'll throw you in a warming-pan for nothing, and lend you a toasting-fork for life. Now come; what do you say after that splen-

did offer? Say two pound, say thirty shillings, say a pound, say ten shillings, say five, say two and six. You don't say even two and six. You say two and three? No. You shan't have the lot for two and three. I'd sooner give it you, if you was good-looking enough. Here! Missis! Chuck the old man and woman into the cart, put the horse to, and drive 'em away and bury 'em!" Such were the last words of Willum Marigold, my own father, and they were carried out, by him and by his wife, my own mother, on one and the same day, as I ought to know, having followed as a mourner.

My father had been a lovely one in his time at the Cheap Jack work, as his dying observations went to prove. But I top him. I don't say it because it's myself, but because it has been universally acknowledged by all that has had the means of comparison. I have worked at it. I have measured myself against other public speakers,—Members of Parliament, Platforms, Pulpits, Counsel learned in the law,—and where I have found 'em good, I have took a bit of imagination from 'em, and where I have found 'em bad, I have let 'em alone. Now I'll tell you what. I mean to go down into my grave declaring that of all the callings ill-used in Great Britain, the Cheap

Jack calling is the worst used. Why ain't we a profession ? Why ain't we endowed with privileges ? Why are we forced to take out a hawker's license, when no such thing is expected of the political hawkers ? where's the difference betwixt us ? Except that we are Cheap Jacks and they are Dear Jacks, I don't see any difference but what's in our favor.

For look here ! Say it's election time. I am on the foot-board of my cart in the market-place on a Saturday night. I put up a general miscellaneous lot. I say : " Now here, my free and independent woters, I'm a going to give you such a chance as you never had in all your born days, nor yet the days preceding. Now I'll show you what I am a going to do with you. Here's a pair of razors that'll shave you closer than the Board of Guardians ; here's a flat-iron worth its weight in gold ; here's a frying-pan artificially flavored with essence of beefsteaks to that degree that you've only got for the rest of your lives to fry bread and dripping in it and there you are replete with animal food ; here's a genuine chronometer watch in such a solid silver case that you may knock at the door with it when you come home late from a social meeting, and rouse your wife and family, and save up your knocker for the postman ;

and here's half a dozen dinner-plates that you may play the cymbals with to charm the baby when it's fractious. Stop! I'll throw you in another article, and I'll give you that, and it's a rolling-pin; and if the baby can only get it well into its mouth when it's teeth is coming and rub the gums once with it, they'll come through double, in a fit of laughter equal to being tickled. Stop again! I'll throw you in another article, because I don't like the looks of you, for you haven't the appearance of buyers unless I lose by you, and because I'd rather lose than not take money to-night, and that's a looking-glass in which you may see how ugly you look when you don't bid. What do you say now? Come! Do you say a pound? Not you, for you haven't got it. Do you say ten shillings? Not you, for you owe more to the tallyman. Well then, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll heap 'em all on the foot-board of the cart,—there they are! razors, flat-iron, frying-pan, chronometer watch, dinner-plates, rolling-pin, and looking-glass,—take 'em all away for four shillings, and I'll give you sixpence for your trouble!" This is me, the Cheap Jack. But on the Monday morning, in the same market-place, comes the Dear Jack on the hustings—*his* cart—and what does *he* say?

Now my free and independent woters, I am a going to give you such a chance" (he begins just like me) "as you never had in all your born days, and that's the chance of sending Myself to Parliament. Now I'll tell you what I am a going to do for you. Here's the interests of this magnificent town promoted above all the rest of the civilized and uncivilized earth. Here's your railways carried, and your neighbors' railways jockeyed. Here's all your sons in the Post-office. Here's Britannia smiling on you. Here's the eyes of Europe on you. Here's uniwersal prosperity for you, repletion of animal food, golden corn-fields, gladsome homesteads, and rounds of applause from your own hearts, all in one lot, and that's myself. Will you take me as I stand? You won't? Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come now! I'll throw you in anything you ask for. There! Church-rates, abolition of church-rates, more malt-tax, no malt-tax, uniwersal education to the highest mark, or uniwersal ignorance to the lowest, total abolition of flogging in the army or a dozen for every private once a month all round, Wrongs of Men or Rights of Women—only say which it shall be, take 'em or leave 'em, and I'm of your opinion altogether, and the lot's your own on

your own terms. There! You won't take it yet! Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come! You *are* such free and independent woters, and I *am* so proud of you—you *are* such a noble and enlightened constituency, and I *am* so ambitious of the honor and dignity of being your member, which is by far the highest level to which the wings of the human mind can soar,—that I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll throw you in all the public-houses in your magnificent town for nothing. Will that content you? It won't? You won't take the lot yet? Well, then, before I put the horse in and drive away, and make the offer to the next most magnificent town that can be discovered, I'll tell you what I'll do. Take the lot, and I'll drop two thousand pound in the streets of your magnificent town for them to pick up that can. Not enough? Now look here. This is the very furthest that I'm a going to. I'll make it two thousand five hundred. And still you won't? Here, missis! Put the horse—no, stop half a moment, I shouldn't like to turn my back upon you neither for a trifle, I'll make it two thousand seven hundred and fifty pound. There! Take the lot on your own terms, and I'll count out two thousand seven hundred and fifty pound on the footboard of the cart-

to be dropped in the streets of your magnificent town for them to pick up that can. What do you say? Come now! You won't do better, and you may do worse. You take it? Hooray! Sold again, and got the seat.'

These Dear Jacks soap the people shameful, but we Cheap Jacks don't. We tell'em the truth about themselves to their faces, and scorn to court 'em. As to wenturesomeness in the way of puffing up the lots, the Dear Jacks beat us hollow. It is considered in the Cheap Jack calling, that better patter can be made out of a gun than any article we put up from the cart, except a pair of spectacles. I often hold forth about a gun for a quarter of an hour, and feel as if I need never leave off. But when I tell'em what the gun can do, and what the gun has brought down, I never go half so far as the Dear Jacks do when they make speeches in praise of *their* guns,—their great guns that set 'em on to do it. Besides, I'm in business for myself; I an't sent down into the market-place to order, as they are. Besides, again, my guns don't know what I say in their laudation, and their guns do, and the whole concern of 'em have reason to be sick and ashamed all round. These are some of my arguments for declaring that the

Cheap Jack calling is treated ill in Great Britain, and for turning warm when I think of the other Jacks in question setting themselves up to pretend to look down upon it.

I courted my wife from the foot-board of the cart. I did indeed. She was a Suffolk young woman, and it was in Ipswich market-place right opposite the corn-chandler's shop. I had noticed her up at a window last Saturday that was, appreciating highly. I had took to her, and I had said to myself, "If not already disposed of, I'll have that lot." Next Saturday that come, I pitched the cart on the same pitch, and I was in very high feather indeed, keeping 'em laughing the whole of the time, and getting off the goods briskly. At last I took out of my waistcoat-pocket a small lot wrapped in soft paper, and I put it this way (looking up at the window where she was). "Now here, my blooming English maidens, is an article, the last article of the present evening's sale, which I offer to only you, the lovely Suffolk Dump-lings biling over with beauty, and I won't take a bid of a thousand pounds for from any man alive. Now what is it? Why, I'll tell you what it is. It's made of fine gold, and it's not broke, though there's a hole in the middle of it, and it's stronger than any fetter

that ever was forged, though it's smaller than any finger in my set of ten. Why ten? Because, when my parents made over my property to me, I tell you true, there was twelve sheets, twelve towels, twelve table-cloths, twelve knives, twelve forks, twelve tablespoons, and twelve teaspoons, but my set of fingers was two short of a dozen, and could never since be matched. Now what else is it? Come, I'll tell you. It's a hoop of solid gold wrapped in a silver-curl-paper that I myself took off the shining locks of the ever beautiful old lady in Threadneedle Street, London city; I wouldn't tell you so if I hadn't the paper to show, or you mightn't believe it even of me. Now what else is it? It's a man-trap and a handcuff, the parish stocks, and a leg-lock, all in gold and all in one. Now what else is it? It's a wedding-ring. Now I'll tell you what I'm a going to do with it. I'm not a going to offer this lot for money; but I mean to give it to the next of you beauties that laughs, and I'll pay her a visit to-morrow morning at exactly half after nine o'clock as the chimes go, and I'll take her out for a walk to put up the banns." *She* laughed, and got the ring handed up to her. When I called in the morning, she says, "O dear! It's never you, and you never mean it?"

"It's ever me," says I, "and I am ever yours, and I ever mean it." So we got married after being put up three times,—which, by the by, is quite in the Cheap Jack way again, and shows once more how the Cheap Jack customs pervade society.

She wasn't a bad wife, but she had a temper. If she could have parted with that one article at a sacrifice, I wouldn't have swapped her away in exchange for any other woman in England. Not that I ever did swap her away, for we lived together till she died, and that was thirteen year. Now, my lords and ladies and gentlefolks all, I'll let you into a secret, though you won't believe it. Thirteen year of temper in a Palace would try the worst of you, but thirteen year of temper in a Cart would try the best of you. You are kept so very close to it in a cart, you see. There's thousands of couples among you getting on like sweet ile upon a whetstone in houses five and six pairs of stairs high, that would go to the Divorce Court in a cart. Whether the jolting makes it worse, I don't undertake to decide ; but in a cart it does come home to you, and stick to you. Wiolence in a cart is *so* wiolent, and aggrawation in a cart is *so* aggrawating.

We might have had such a pleasant life! A



roomy cart, with the large goods hung outside, and the bed slung underneath it when on the road, an iron pot and a kettle, a fireplace for the cold weather, a chimney for the smoke, a hanging shelf and a cupboard, a dog, and a horse. What more do you want? You draw off upon a bit of turf in a green lane or by the roadside, you hobble your old horse and turn him grazing, you light your fire upon the ashes of the last visitors, you cook your stew, and you wouldn't call the Emperor of France your father. But have a temper in the cart, flinging language and the hardest goods in stock at you, and where are you then? Put a name to your feelings.

My dog knew as well when she was on the turn as I did. Before she broke out, he would give a howl, and bolt. How he knew it, was a mystery to me; but the sure and certain knowledge of it would wake him up out of his soundest sleep, and he would give a howl, and bolt. At such times I wished I was him.

The worst of it was, we had a daughter born to us, and I love children with all my heart. When she was in her furies, she beat the child. This got to be so shocking, as the child got to be four or five year old, that I have many a time gone on with my

whip over my shoulder, at the old horse's head, sobbing and crying worse than ever little Sophy did. For how could I prevent it? Such a thing is not to be tried with such a temper—in a cart—without coming to a fight. It's in the natural size and formation of a cart to bring it to a fight. And then the poor child got worse terrified than before, as well as worse hurt generally, and her mother made complaints to the next people we lighted on, and the word went round, "Here's a wretch of a Cheap Jack been a beating his wife."

Little Sophy was such a brave child! She grew to be quite devoted to her poor father, though he could do so little to help her. She had a wonderful quantity of shining dark hair, all curling natural about her. It is quite astonishing to me now, that I didn't go tearing mad when I used to see her run from her mother before the cart, and her mother catch her by this hair, and pull her down by it, and beat her.

Such a brave child I said she was! Ah! with reason.

"Don't you mind next time, father dear," she would whisper to me, with her little face still flushed, and her bright eyes still wet; "if I don't cry

out, you may know I'm not much hurt. And even if I do cry out, it will only be to get mother to let go and leave off." What I have seen the little spirit bear—for me—without crying out!

Yet in other respects her mother took great care of her. Her clothes were always clean and neat, and her mother was never tired of working at 'em. Such is the inconsistency in things. Our being down in the marsh country in unhealthy weather, I consider the cause of Sophy's taking bad low fever; but however she took it, once she got it she turned away from her mother forevermore, and nothing would persuade her to be touched by her mother's hand. She would shiver and say, "No, no, no," when it was offered at, and would hide her face on my shoulder, and hold me tighter round the neck.

The Cheap Jack business had been worse than ever I had known it, what with one thing and what with another (and not least what with rail-roads, which will cut it all to pieces, I expect at last), and I was run dry of money. For which reason, one night at that period of little Sophy's being so bad, either we must have come to a dead-lock for victuals and drink, or I must have pitched the cart as I did.

I couldn't get the dear child to lie down or leave

go of me, and indeed I hadn't the heart to try, so I stepped out on the foot-board with her holding round my neck. They all set up a laugh when they see us, and one chuckle-headed Joskin (that I hated for it) made the bidding, "Tuppence for her!"

"Now, you country boobies," says I, feeling as if my heart was a heavy weight at the end of a broken sash-line, "I give you notice that I am a-going to charm the money out of your pockets, and to give you so much more than your money's worth that you'll only persuade yourselves to draw your Saturday night's wages ever again arterwards by the hopes of meeting me to lay 'em out with, which you never will, and why not? Because I've made my fortune by selling my goods on a large scale for seventy-five per cent less than I give for 'em and I am consequently to be elevated to the House of Peers next week, by the title of the Duke of Cheap and Markis Jackaloorul. Now let's know what you want to-night, and you shall have it. But first of all, shall I tell you why I have got this little girl round my neck? You don't want to know? Then you shall. She belongs to the Fairies. She's a fortune-teller. She can tell me all about you in a whisper, and can put me up to whether you're a-

going to buy a lot or leave it. Now do you want a saw? No, she says you don't because you're too clumsy to use one. Else here's a saw which would be a lifelong blessing to a handy man, at four shillings, at three and six, at three, at two and six, at two, at eighteen-pence. But none of you shall have it at any price on account of your well-known awkwardness which would make it manslaughter. The same objection applies to this set of three planes which I won't let you have either, so don't bid for 'em. Now I am a-going to ask her what you do want." (Then I whispered, "Your head burns so, that I am afraid it hurts you bad, my pet," and she answered, without opening her heavy eyes, "Just a little, father.") "Oh! This little fortune-teller says it's a memorandum-book you want. Then why didn't you mention it? Here it is. Look at it. Two hundred superfine hotpressed wire-wove pages—if you don't believe me, count 'em—ready ruled for your expenses, an everlastingly pointed pencil to put 'em down with, a double bladed pen-knife to scratch 'em out with, a book of printed tables to calculate your income with, and a camp-stool to sit down upon while you give your mind to it. Stop! And an umbrella to keep the moon off when you

give your mind to it on a pitch dark night. Now I won't ask you how much for the lot, but how little? How little are you thinking of! Don't be ashamed to mention it, because my fortune-teller knows already." (Then making believe to whisper, I kissed her and she kissed me.) "Why, she says you're thinking of as little as three and three-pence! I couldn't have believed it, even of you, unless she told me. Three and threepence! And a set of printed tables in the lot that'll calculate your income up to forty thousand a year. With an income of forty thousand a year, you grudge three and sixpence. Well then, I'll tell you my opinion. I so despise the threepence, that I'd sooner take three shillings. There. For three shillings, three shillings, three shillings! Gone. Hand 'em over to the lucky man.

As there had been no bid at all, everybody looked about and grinned at everybody, while I touched little Sophy's face and asked her if she felt faint, or giddy. "Not very father. It will soon be over." Then turning from the pretty patient eyes, which were opened now, and seeing nothing but grins across my lighted grease pot, I went on again in my Cheap Jack style, "Where's the butcher?" (My sorrowful eye had just caught sight of a fat young butcher on the out-

side of the crowd.) "She says the good luck is the butcher's. Where is he?" Everybody handed on the blushing butcher to the front, and there was a roar, and the butcher felt himself obliged to put his hand in his pocket, and take the lot. The party so picked out in general, does feel obliged to take the lot,—good four times out of six. Then we had another lot, the counterpart of that one, and sold it sixpence cheaper, which is always wery much enjoyed. Then we had the spectacles. It ain't a special profitable lot, but I put 'em on and I see what the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to take off the taxes, and I see what the sweetheart of the young woman in the shawl is doing at home and I see what the Bishops has got for dinner, and a deal more that seldom fails to fetch 'em up in their spirits ; and the better their spirits the better their bids. Then we had the ladies' lot,—the teapot, tea-caddy, glass sugar-basin, half a dozen spoons, and caudle-cup,—and all the time I was making similar excuses to give a look or two and say a word or two to my poor child. It was while the second ladies lot was holding' em enchained that I felt her lift herself a little on my shoulder, to look across the dark street. "What troubles you, darling?" "Nothing troubles me, father. I am not at all troubled. But don't I

see a pretty churchyard over there? ” “ Yes, my dear.” “ Kiss me twice, dear father, and lay me down to rest upon that churchyard grass so soft and green.” I staggered back into the cart with her head dropping on my shoulder, and I says to her mother, “ Quick. Shut the door! Don’t let those laughing people see ! ” “ What’s the matter ? ” she cries. “ O woman, woman,” I tells her, “ you’ll never catch, my little Sophy by her hair again, for she has flown away from you ! ”

May be those were harder words than I meant ’em ; but from that time forth my wife took to brooding, and would sit in the cart or walk beside it, hours at a stretch, with her arms crossed, and her eyes looking on the ground. When her furies took her (which was rather seldomer than before) they took her in a new way, and she banged herself about to that extent that I was forced to hold her. She got none the better for a little drink now and then, and through some years I used to wonder, as I plodded along at the old horse’s head whether there were many carts upon the road that held as much dreariness as mine, for all my being looked up to as the King of the Cheap Jacks. So had our lives went on till one summer evening, when as we were coming into Exeter

out of the farther West of England we saw a woman beating a child in a cruel manner, who screamed, "Don't beat me! Oh mother, mother, mother!" Then my wife stopped her ears, and ran away like a wild thing, and next day she was found in the river.

Me and my dog were all the company left in the cart now; and the dog learned to give a short bark when they wouldn't bid and to give another and a nod of his head when I asked him, "Who said half a crown? Are you the gentleman, sir, that offered half a crown?" He attained to an immense height of popularity, and I shall always believe taught himself entirely out of his own head to growl at any person in the crowd that bid as low as sixpence. But he got to be well on in years, and one night when I was convulsing York with the spectacles, he took a convulsion on his own account upon the very foot-board by me, and it finished him.

Being naturally of a tender turn, I had dreadful lonely feelings on me arter this. I conquered 'em at selling times, having a reputation to keep (not to mention keeping myself), but they got me down in private, and rolled upon me. That's often the way with us public characters. See us on the foot-board, and you'd give pretty well anything you possess to be

us. See us off the foot-board, and you'd add a trifle to be off your bargain. It was under those circumstances that I come acquainted with a giant. I might have been too high to fall into conversation with him, had it not been for my lonely feelings. For the general rule is, going round the country, to draw the line at dressing up. When a man can't trust his getting a living to his undisguised abilities, you consider him below your sort. And this giant when on view figured as a Roman.

He was a languid young man, which I attribute to the distance betwixt his extremities. He had a little head and less in it, he had weak eyes and weak knees, and altogether you couldn't look at him without feeling that there was greatly too much of him both for his joints and his mind. But he was an amiable though timid young man, (his mother let him out, and spent the money), and we come acquainted when he was walking to ease the horse betwixt two fairs. He was called Rinaldo di Velasco, his name being Pickleson.

This giant, otherwise Pickleson, mentioned to me under the seal of confidence that beyond his being a burden to himself, his life was made a burden to him by the cruelty of his master towards a

step-daughter who was deaf and dumb. Her mother was dead and she had no living soul to take her part, and was used most hard. She travelled with his masters caravan only because there was nowhere to leave her, and this giant, otherwise Pickleson, did go so far as to believe that his master often tried to lose her. He was such a very languid young man, that I don't know how long it didn't take him to get this story out, but it passed through his defective circulation to his top extremity in course of time.

When I heard this account from the giant, otherwise Pickleson, and likewise that the poor girl had beautiful long dark hair, and was often pulled down by it and beaten, I couldn't see the giant through what stood in my eyes. Having wiped 'em I give him sixpence (for he was kept as short as he was long), and he laid it out in two threepenn'orths of gin-and-water, which so brisked him up, that he sang the Favorite Comic of "Shivery Shakery, ain' it cold?"—a popular effect which his master had tried every other means to get out of him as a Roman wholly in vain.

His master's name was Mim, a very hoarse man, and I knew him to speak to. I went to that Fair

as a mere civilian, leaving the cart outside the town and I looked about the back of the Vans while the performing was going on, and at last, sitting dozing against a muddy cartwheel, I come upon the poor girl who was deaf and dumb. At the first look, I might almost have judged that she had escaped from the Wild Beast Show; but at the second I thought better of her, and thought that if she was more cared for and more kindly used she would be like my child. She was just the same age that my own daughter would have been, if her head had not fell down upon my shoulder that most unfortunate night.

To cut it short, I spoke confidential to Mim while he was beating the gong outside betwixt two lots of Pickleson's publics, and I put it to him, "She lies heavy on your hands; what'll you take for her?" Mim was a most ferocious swearer. Suppressing that part of his reply which was much the longest part, his reply was, "A pair of braces." "Now I'll tell you," says I, "what I'm a going to do with you. I'm a going to fetch you half a dozen pair of the primest braces in the cart, and then to take her away with me." Says Mim (again ferocious), "I'll believe it when I've got the goods and no

sooner." I made all the haste I could, lest he should think twice of it, and the bargain was completed, which Pickleson—he was thereby so relieved in his mind, that he come out at his little back door longways, like a serpent, and gave us "Shivery Shakery" in a whisper among the wheels at parting.

It was happy days for both of us when Sophy and me began to travel in the cart. I at once gave her the name of Sophy, to put her ever towards me in the attitude of my own daughter. We soon made out to begin to understand one another, through the goodness of the Heavens, when she knowed that I meant true and kind by her. In a very little time she was wonderful fond of me. You have no idea what it is to have anybody wonderful fond of you, unless you have been got down and rolled upon by the lonely feelings, that I have mentioned as having once got the better of me.

You'd have laughed—or the reverse—it's according to your disposition—if you could have seen me trying to teach Sophy. At first I was helped—you'd never guess by what—milestones. I got some large alphabets in a box, all the letters separate on bits of bone, and say we was going to WINDSOR, I give her those letters in that order, and then at every

milestone I showed her those same letters in that same order again, and pointed towards the abode of royalty. Another time I give her C A R T, and then chalked the same upon the cart. Another time I give her D O C T O R M A R I G O L D, and hung a corresponding inscription outside my waistcoat. People that met us might stare a bit and laugh, but what did I care, if she caught the idea? She caught it after long patience and trouble, and then we did begin to get on swimmingly, I believe you! At first she was a little given to consider me the cart, and the cart the abode of royalty, but that soon wore off.

We had our signs, too, and they was hundreds in number. Sometimes she would sit looking at me and considering hard how to communicate with me about something fresh,—how to ask me what she wanted explained,—and then she was (or I thought she was; what does it signify?) so like my child with those years added to her, that I half believed it was herself trying to tell me where she had been to up in the skies, and what she had seen, since that unhappy night when she fled away. She had a pretty face and now that there was no one to drag at her bright dark hair, and it was all in order, there was a some-

thing touching in her looks that made the cart most peaceful and most quiet though not at all melancholy. [N. B. In the Cheap Jack patter, we generally sound it lemonjolly; and it gets a laugh.]

The way she learnt to understand any look of mine was truly surprising. When I sold of a night, she would sit in the cart unseen by them outside, and would give a eager look into my eyes when I looked in, and would hand me straight the precise article or articles I wanted. And then she would clap her hands, and laugh for joy. And as for me, seeing her so bright, and remembering what she was when I first lighted on her, starved and beaten and ragged, leaning asleep against the muddy cart-wheel, it give me such heart that I gained a greater heighth of reputation then ever, and I put Pickleson down (by the name of Mim's Travelling Giant otherwise Pickleson) for a fy pun note in my will.

This happiness went on in the cart till she was sixteen year old. By which time I began to feel not satisfied that I had done my whole duty by her, and to consider that she ought to have better teaching than I could give her. It drew a many tears on both sides when I commenced explaining my views to her; but what's right is right, and you can't

neither by tears nor laughter do away with its character.

So I took her hand in mine, and I went with her one day to the Deaf and Dumb Establishment in London, and when the gentleman come to speak to us, I says to him: "Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you, sir. I am nothing but a Cheap Jack, but of late years I have laid by for a rainy day notwithstanding. This is my only daughter (adopted), and you can't produce a deafer nor a dumber. Teach her the most that can be taught her in the shortest separation that can be named,—state the figure for it,—and I am game to put the money down. I won't bate you a single farthing, sir, but I'll put down the money here and now, and I'll thankfully throw you in a pound to take it. There!" The gentleman smiled, and then, "Well, well," says he, "I must first know what she has learned already. How do you communicate with her!" Then I showed him, and she wrote in printed writing many names of things and so forth; and we held some sprightly conversation, Sophy and me, about a little story in a book which the gentleman showed her, and which she was able to read. "This is most extraordinary," says the gentleman; "is it possible that you have

been her only teacher?" "I have been her only teacher, sir," I says, "besides herself." "Then" says the gentleman, and more acceptable words was never spoke to me, "you're a clever fellow, and a good fellow." This he makes known to Sophy, who kisses his hands, claps her own, and laughs and cries upon it.

We saw the gentleman four times in all, and when he took down my name and asked how in the world it ever chanced to be Doctor, it come out that he was own nephew by the sister's side, if you'll believe me, to the very Doctor that I was called after. This made our footing still easier, and he says to me:—

"Now Marigold, tell me what more do you want your adopted daughter to know?"

"I want her, sir, to be cut off from the world as little as can be, considering her deprivations, and therefore to be able to read whatever is wrote with perfect ease and pleasure."

"My good fellow," urges the gentleman, opening his eyes wide, "why *I* can't do that myself!"

I took his joke and give him a laugh (knowing by experience how flat you fall without it), and I mended my words accordingly.

"What do you mean to do with her afterwards?" asks the gentleman, with a sort of a doubtful eye. "To take her about the country?"

"In the cart, sir, but only in the cart. She will live a private life, you understand, in the cart. I should never think of bringing her infirmities before the public. I wouldn't make a show of her for any money."

The gentleman nodded, and seemed to approve,

"Well," says he, "can you part with her for two years?"

"To do her that good,—yes, sir."

"There's another question," says the gentleman, looking towards her,—“can she part with you for two years?"

I don't know that it was a harder matter of itself (for the other was hard enough to me), but it was harder to get over. However, she was pacified to it at last, and the separation betwixt us was settled. How it cut up both of us when it took place, and when I left her at the door in the dark of an evening, I don't tell. But I know this: remembering that night, I shall never pass that same establishment without a heartache and a swelling in the throat; and I couldn't put you up the best of lots in sight of

it with my usual spirit,—no, not even the gun, nor the pair of spectacles,—for five hundred pound reward from the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and throw in the honor of putting my legs under his mahogany afterwards.

Still, the loneliness that followed in the cart was not the old loneliness, because there was a term put to it, however long to look forward to; and because I could think, when I was anyways down, that she belonged to me and I belonged to her. Always planning for her coming back, I bought in a few months' time another cart, and what do you think I planned to do with it? I'll tell you. I planned to fit it up with shelves and books for her reading, and to have a seat in it where I could sit and see her read, and think that I had been her first teacher. Not hurrying over the job, I had the fittings knocked together in contriving ways under my own inspection, and here was her bed in a berth with curtains, and there was her reading-table, and here was her writing-desk, and elsewhere was her books in rows upon rows, picters and no picters, bindings and no bindings, gilt-edged and plain, just as I could pick 'em up for her in lots up and down the country, North and South and West and East, Winds liked best and

winds liked least, Here and there and gone astray,
Over the hills and far away. And when I had got
together pretty well as many books as the cart
would neatly hold, a new scheme come into my head
which as it turned out, kept my time and attention a
good deal employed, and helped me over the two
years' stile.

Without being of an awaricious temper, I like to
be the owner of things. I should'nt wish, for instance,
to go partners with yourself in the Cheap Jack cart.
It's not that I mistrust you, but that I'd rather know
it was mine. Similarly, very likely, you'd rather
know it was yours. Well! A kind of a jealousy
began to creep into my mind when I reflected that
all of those books would have been read by other
people long before they was read by her. It seemed
to take away from her being the owner of 'em like.
In this way the question got into my head: Couldn't
I have a book new-made express for her, which she
should be the first to read?

It pleased me, that thought did; and as I never
was a man to let a thought sleep (you must wake up
all the whole family of thoughts you've got and
burn their nightcaps, or you won't do in the Cheap
Jack line), I set to work at it. Considering that I

was in the habit of changing so much about the country, and that I should have to find out a literary character here to make a deal with, and another literary character there to make a deal with, as opportunities presented, I hit on the plan that this same book should be a general miscellaneous lot,—like the razors, flat-iron, chronometer watch, dinner-plates, rolling-pin, and looking-glass,—and shouldn't be offered as a single individual article, like the spectacles or the gun. When I had come to that conclusion, I come to another, which shall likewise be yours.

Often had I regretted that she never had heard me on the foot-board, and that she never could hear me. It ain't that *I* am vain, but that *you* don't like to put your own light under a bushel. What's the worth of your reputation, if you can't convey the reason for it to the person you most wish to value it? Now I'll put it to you. Is it worth sixpence, fippence, fourpence, threepence, twopence, a penny, a half-penny, a farthing? No, it ain't. Not worth a farthing. Very well then. My conclusion was that I would begin her book with some account of myself. So that, through reading a specimen or two of me on the foot-board, she might form an idea of

my merits there. I was aware that I couldn't do myself justice. A man can't write his eye (at least I don't know how to), nor yet can a man write his voice, nor the rate of his talk, nor the quickness of his action, nor his general spicy way. But he can write his turns of speech, when he is a public speaker, —and indeed I have heard that he very often does, before he speaks 'em.

Well ! Having formed that resolution, then come the question of a name. How did I hammer that hot iron into shape ? This way. The most difficult explanation I had ever had with her was, how I come to be called Doctor, and yet was no Doctor. After all, I felt that I had failed of getting it correctly into her mind, with my utmost pains. But trusting to her improvement in the two years, I thought that I might trust to her understanding it when she should come to read it as put down by my own hand. Then I thought I would try a joke with her and watch how it took, by which of itself I might fully judge of her understanding it. We had first discovered the mistake we had dropped into, through her having asked me to prescribe for her when she had supposed me to be a Doctor in a medical point of view ; so thinks I, “ Now if I give this book the

name of my Prescriptions, and if she catches the idea that my only Prescriptions are for her amusement and interest,—to make her laugh in a pleasant way, or to make her cry in a pleasant way,—it will be a delightful proof to both of us that we have got over our difficulty. It fell out to absolute perfection. For when she saw the book, as I had got it up,—the printed and pressed book,—lying on her desk in her cart, and saw the title DOCTOR MARIGOLD'S PRESCRIPTIONS, she looked at me for a moment with astonishment, then fluttered the leaves, then broke out a laughing in the charmingest way, then felt her pulse and shook her head, then turned the pages pretending to read them most attentive, then kissed the book to me, and put it to her bosom with both her hands. I never was better pleased in all my life!

But let me not anticipate. (I take that expression out of a lot of romances I bought for her. I never opened a single one of 'em—and I have opened many—but I found the romancer saying “let me not anticipate.” Which being so, I wonder why he did anticipate, or who asked him to it.) Let me not, I say anticipate. This same book took up all my spare time. It was no play to get the other articles

together in the general miscellaneous lot, but when it come to my own article ! There ! I couldn't have believed the blotting, nor yet the buckling to at it nor the patience over it. Which again is like the foot-board. The public have no idea.

At last it was done, and the two years' time was gone after all the other time before it, and where it's all gone to, who knows ? The new cart was finished, —yellow outside, relieved with wermillion and brass fittings,—the old horse was put in it, a new'un and a boy being laid on for the Cheap Jack cart,—and I cleaned myself up to go and fetch her. Bright cold weather it was, cart-chimneys smoking, carts pitched private on a piece of waste ground over at Wandsworth where you may see 'em from the Sou'western Railway when not upon the road. (Look out of the right-hand window going down.)

“Marigold,” says the gentleman, giving his hand hearty, “I am very glad to see you.”

“Yet I have my doubts, sir,” says I, “if you can be half as glad to see me as I am to see you.”

“The time has appeared so long,—has it, Marigold ?”

“I won't say that, sir, considering its real length ; but—”

"What a start, my good fellow !"

"Ah ! I should think it was ! Grown such a woman, so pretty, so intelligent, so expressive ! I knew then that she must be really like my child, or I could never have known her, standing quite by the door.

"You are affected," says the gentleman, in a kindly manner.

"I feel, sir," says I, "that I am but a rough chap in a sleeved waistcoat."

"I feel," said the gentleman, "that it was you raised her from misery and degradation, and brought her into communication with her kind. But why do we converse alone together, when we can converse so well with her ? Address her in your own way."

"I am such a rough chap in a sleeved waist-coat, sir," says I, "and she is such a graceful woman, and she stands so quiet at the door !"

"Try if she moves at the old sign," says the gentleman.

They had got it up together o' purpose to please me ! For when I give her the old sign, she rushed to my feet, and dropped upon her knees, holding up her hands to me with pouring tears of love and joy ;

and when I took her hands and lifted her, she clasped me round the neck, and laid there ; and I don't know what a fool I didn't make of myself, until we all three settled down into talking without sound, as if there was a something soft and pleasant spread over the whole world for us.

So every item of my plan was crowned with success. Our reunited life was more than all that we had looked forward to. Content and joy went with us as the wheels of the two carts went round, and the same stopped with us when the two carts stopped. I was as pleased and as proud as a Pug-Dog with his muzzle black-leaded for a evening party, and his tail extra curled by machinery.

But I had left something out of my calculations. Now, what had I left out ? To help you to a guess, I'll say, a figure. Come make a guess, and guess right. Naught ? No. Nine ? No. Eight ? No. Seven ? No. Six ? No. Five ? No. Four ? No. Three ? No. Two ? No. One ? No. Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Now I'll say it's another sort of figure altogether. There. Why then, says you, it's mortal figure. No nor yet a mortal figure by such means you get yourself penned into a corner, and you can't help guessing a

immortal figure. That's about it. Why didn't you say so sooner?

Yes. It was a immortal figure that I had altogether left out of my calculations. Neither man's nor woman's but a child's. Girl's, or boy's? Boy's. "I, says the sparrow, with my bow and arrow." Now you have got it.

We were down at Lancaster, and I had done two nights more than fair average business(though I cannot in honor recommend them as a quick audience) in the open square there, near the end of the street where Mr. Sly's King's Arms and Royal Hotel stands. Mim's travelling giant, otherwise Pickleson, happened at the self-same time to be a trying it on in the town. The genteel lay was adopted with him. No hint of a van. Green baize alcove leading up to Pickleson in a Auction Room. Printed poster. "Free list suspended, with the exception of that proud boast of an enlightened country, a free press. Schools admitted by private arrangement. Nothing to raise a blush in the cheek of youth or shock the most fastidious." Mim swearing most horrible and terrific in a pink calico pay-place, at the slackness of the public. Serious handbill in the shops importing that it was all but impossible to

come to a right understanding of the history of David without seeing Pickleson.

I went to the Auction Room in question, and I found it entirely empty of everything but echoes and mouldiness, with the single exception of Pickleson on a piece of red drugget. This suited my purpose, as I wanted a private and confidential word with him, which was : " Pickleson. Owing much happiness to you, I put you in my will for a fypunnote ; but, to save trouble, here's fourpunten down, which may equally suit your views, and let us so conclude the transaction." Pickleson, who up to that remark had had the dejected appearance of a long Roman rush-light that couldn't anyhow get lighted, brightened up at his top extremity, and made his acknowledgments in a way which (for him) was parliamentary eloquence. He likewise did add, that, having ceased to draw as a Roman, Mim had made proposals for his going in as a converted Indian Giant worked upon by the Dairyman's Daughter. This, Pickleson, having no acquaintance with the tract named after that young woman, and not being willing to couple gag with his serious views, had declined to do, there by leading to words and the total stoppage of the unfortunate young man's beer. All of which, dur

ing the whole of the interview, was confirmed by the ferocious growling of Mim down below in the pay-place, which shook the giant like a leaf.

But what was to the present point in the remarks of the travelling giant, otherwise Pickleson, was this : "Doctor Marigold,"—I give his words without a hope of conveying their feebleness,—“who is the strange young man that hangs about your carts ?”—“The strange young *man* ?” I gives him back, thinking that he meant her, and his languid circulation had dropped a syllable. “Doctor,” he returns, with a pathos calculated to draw a tear from even a manly eye, “I am weak, but not so weak yet as that I don’t know my words. I repeat them Doctor. The strange young man.” It then appeared that Pickleson, being forced to stretch his legs (not that they wanted it) only at times when he couldn’t be seen for nothing, to wit in the dead of night and towards daybreak, had twice seen hanging about my carts, in that same town of Lancaster where I had been only two nights, this same unknown young man.

It put me rather out of sorts. What it meant as to particulars I no more foreboded then than you forebode now, but it put me rather out of sorts. Howsoever, I made light of it to Pickleson, as ’ I

took leave of Pickleson, advising him to spend his legacy in getting up his stamina, and to continue to stand by his religion. Towards morning, I kept a lookout for the strange young man, and—what was more—I saw the strange young man. He was well dressed and well looking. He loitered very nigh my carts, watching them like as if he was taking care of them, and soon after day-break turned and went away. I sent a hail after him, but he never started or looked round, or took the smallest notice.

We left Lancaster within an hour or two, on our way towards Carlisle. Next morning, at day-break, I looked out again, and there he was once more. I sent another hail after him, but, as before, he gave not the slightest sign of being anyways disturbed. This put a thought into my head. Acting on it, I watched him in different manners and at different times not necessary to enter into, till I found that this strange young man was deaf and dumb.

The discovery turned me over, because I knew that a part of that establishment where she had been was allotted to young men (some of them well off), and I thought to myself, "If she favors him, where am I? and where is all that I have worked and planned for?" Hoping—I must confess to the

selfishness—that she might *not* favor him, I set myself to find out. At last I was by accident present at a meeting between them in the open air, looking on leaning behind a fir-tree without their knowing of it. It was a moving meeting for all the three parties concerned. I knew every syllable that passed between them as well as they did. I listened with my eyes, which had come to be as quick and true with deaf and dumb conversation, as my ears with the talk of people that can speak. He was a going out to China as clerk in a merchant's house, which his father had been before him. He was in circumstances to keep a wife, and he wanted her to marry him, and go along with him. She persisted, no. He asked if she didn't love him. Yes, she loved him dearly, dearly ; but she could never disappoint her beloved, good, noble, generous, and I-don't-know-what-all father (meaning me, the Cheap Jack in the sleeved waistcoat), and she would stay with him, Heaven bless him : though it was to break her heart. Then she cried most bitterly, and that made up my mind.

While my mind had been in an unsettled state about her favoring this young man, I had felt that unreasonable towards Pickleson, that it was well

for him he had got his legacy down. For I often thought, "If it hadn't been for this same weak-minded giant, I might never have come to trouble my head and wex my soul about the young man." But, once that I knew she loved him,—once that I had seen her weep for him,—it was a different thing. I made it right in my mind with Pickleson on the spot, and I shook myself together to do what was right by all.

She had left the young man by that time (for it took a few minutes to get me thoroughly well shook together), and the young man was leaning against another of the fir-trees,—of which there was a cluster,—with his face upon his arm. I touched him on the back. Looking up and seeing me, he says, in our deaf and dumb talk, "Do not be angry."

"I am not angry, good boy. I am your friend. Come with me."

I left him at the foot of the steps of the Library Cart, and I went up alone. She was drying her eyes.

"You have been crying, my dear."

"Yes, father."

"Why?"

"A headache."

"Not a heartache?"

"I said a headache, father."

"Doctor Marigold must prescribe for that headache."

She took up the book of my Prescriptions, and held it up with a forced smile: but seeing me keep still and look earnest, she softly laid it down again, and her eyes were very attentive.

"The Prescription is not there, Sophy."

"Where it is?"

"Here, my dear."

I brought her young husband in and I put her hand in his, and my only further words to both of them were these: "Doctor Marigold's last prescription. To be taken for life." After which I bolted.

When the wedding come off, I mounted a coat (blue and bright buttons), for the first and last time in all my days, and I give Sophy away with my own hand. There were only us three and the gentleman who had charge of her for those two years. I give the wedding dinner of four in the Library Cart. Pigeonpie, a leg of pickled pork, a pair of fowls, and suitable garden stuff. The best of drinks. I give them a speech, and the gentleman gave

us a speech and all our jokes told, and the whole went off like a sky-rocket. In the course of the entertainment I explained to Sophy that I should keep the Library Cart as my living-cart when not upon the road, and that I should keep all her books for her just as they stood, till she come back to claim them. So she went to China with her young husband, and it was a parting sorrowful and heavy, and I got the boy I had another service ; and so as of old, when my child and wife were gone, I went plodding along alone, with my whip over my shoulder, at the old horse's head.

Sophy wrote me many letters, and I wrote her many letters. About the end of the first year she sent me one in an unsteady hand : " Dearest father, not a week ago I had a darling little daughter, but I am so well that they let me write these words to you. Dearest and best father, I hope my child may not be deaf and dumb, but I do not yet know." When I wrote back, I hinted the question : but as Sophy never answered that question, I felt it to be a sad one, and I never repeated it. For a long time our letters were regular, but then they got irregular, through Sophy's husband being moved to another station, and through my being always on the move.

But we were in one another's thoughts, I was equally sure, letters or no letters.

Five years, odd months, had gone since Sophy went away. I was still the King of the Cheap Jacks, and at a greater height of popularity than ever. I had had a first-rate autumn of it, and on the twenty-third of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, I found myself at Uxbridge Middlesex, clean sold out. So I jogged up to London with the old horse, light and easy, to have my Christmas eve and Christmas day alone by the fire in the Library Cart, and then to buy a regular new stock of goods all round, to sell 'em again and get the money.

I am a neat hand at cookery, and I'll tell you what I knocked up for my Christmas-eve dinner in the Library Cart. I knocked up a beefsteak pudding for one, with two kidneys, a dozen oysters, and a couple of mushrooms, thrown in. It's a pudding to put a man in good-humour with everything, except the two bottom buttons of his waist-coat. Having relished that pudding and cleared away, I turned the lamp low, and sat down by the light of the fire, watching it as it shone upon the back of Sophy's books.

Sophy's books so brought up Sophy's self, that I saw her touching face quite plainly, before I dropped off dozing by the fire. This may be a reason why Sophy, with her deaf and dumb child in her arms, seemed to stand silent by me all through my nap. I was on the road, off the road, in all sorts of places, North and South and West and East, Winds liked best best and winds liked least, Here and there and gone astray, Over the hills and far away, and still she stood silent by me, with her silent child in her arms. Even when I awoke with a start, she seemed to vanish, as if she had stood by me in that very place only a single instant before.

I had started at a real sound, and the sound was on the steps of the cart. It was the light hurried tread of a child, coming clambering up. That tread of a child had once been so familiar to me, that for half a moment I believed I was going to see a little ghost.

But the touch of a real child was laid upon the outer handle of the door, and the handle turned, and the door opened a little way, and a real child peeped in. A bright little comely girl with large dark eyes.

Looking full at me, the tiny creature took off her mite of a straw hat, and a quantity of dark curls

tell all about her face. Then she opened her lips, and said in a pretty voice :—

“Grandfather !”

“Ah, my God !” I cries out. “She can speak !”

“Yes, dear grandfather. And I am to ask you whether there was ever any one that I remind you of ?”

In a moment Sophy was round my neck, as well as the child, and her husband was a wringing my hands with his face hid, and we all had to shake ourselves together before we could get over it. And when we did begin to get over it, and I saw the pretty child a talking, pleased and quick and eager and busy, to her mother, in the signs that I had first taught her mother, the happy and yet pitying tears fell rolling down my face.

CHARLES DICKENS.





THE O'CONORS.



SHALL never forget my first introduction to country life in Ireland, my first day's hunting there, or the manner in which I passed the evening afterwards. Nor shall I ever cease to be grateful for the hospitality which I received from the O'Conors of Castle Conor. My acquaintance with that family was first made in the following manner. But before I begin my story let me inform my reader that my name is Archibald Green.

I had been for a fortnight in Dublin, and was about to proceed into County Mayo on business which would occupy me there for some weeks. My headquarters would, I found, be at the town of Ballyglass; and I soon learned that Ballyglass was not a place

in which I should find hotel accommodation of a luxurious kind, or much congenial society indigenous to the place itself.

"But you are a hunting man, you say," said old Sir P—C—; "and in that case you will soon know Tom O'Connor. Tom won't let you be dull. I'd write you a letter to Tom, only he'll certainly make you out without my taking the trouble."

I did think at the time that the old baronet might have written the letter for me, as he had long been a friend of my father's in former days ; but he did not, and I started for Ballyglass with no other introduction to any one in the county than that contained in Sir P——'s promise that I should soon know Mr. Thomas O'Connor.

I had already provided myself with a horse, groom, saddle, and bridle ; and these I sent down *en avant*, that the Ballyglassians might know that I was somebody. Perhaps, before I arrived, Tom O'Connor might learn that a hunting man was coming into the neighborhood, and I might find at the inn a polite note intimating that a bed was at my service at Castle Conor. I had heard so much of the free hospitality of the Irish gentry, as to imagine that such a thing might be possible.

But I found nothing of the kind. Hunting gentlemen in those days were very common in County Mayo, and one horse was no great evidence of a man's standing in the world. Men there, as I learned afterward, are sought for themselves, quite as much as they are elsewhere ; and though my groom's top boots were neat, and my horse a very tidy animal, my entry into Ballyglass created no sensation whatever.

In about four days after my arrival, when I was already infinitely disgusted with the little pot-house in which I was forced to stay, and had made up my mind that the people of County Mayo were a churlish set, I sent my horse on to a meet of the fox-hounds, and followed after, myself, on an open car.

No one but an erratic fox-hunter such as I am—a fox-hunter, I mean, whose lot it has been to wander about from one pack of fox-hounds to another—can understand the melancholy feeling which a man has when he first intrudes himself, unknown by any one, among an entirely new set of sportsmen. When a stranger falls thus, as it were out of the moon, into a hunt, it is impossible that men should not stare at him and ask who he is—and it is so disagreeable to be stared at, and to have such questions asked ! This feeling does not come upon a man in Leices-

tershire or Gloucestershire, where the numbers are large, and a stranger or two will always be overlooked: but in small hunting-fields it is so painful, that a man has to pluck up much courage before he encounters it.

We met on the morning in question at Bingham's Grove. There were not above twelve or fifteen men out, all of whom, or nearly all, were cousins to each other. They seemed to be all Toms and Pats, and Larrys and Micks. I was done up very knowingly in pink, and thought that I looked quite the thing; but, for two or three hours, nobody noticed me.

I had my eyes about me, however, and soon found out which of them was Tom O'Connor. He was a fine looking fellow, thin and tall, but not largely made, with a piercing gray eye and a beautiful voice for speaking to a hound. He had two sons there also—short, slight fellows, but exquisite horsemen. I already felt that I had a kind of acquaintance with the father, but I hardly knew or what ground to put in my claim.

We had no sport early in the morning. It was a cold, bleak February day, with occasional storms of sleet. We rode about from cover to cover but all in vain.

"I am sorry, Sir, that we are to have such a bad day, as you are a stranger here," said one gentleman to me. This was Tom's eldest son, my bosom friend for many a year after. Poor Jack ! I fear that the Encumbered Estates Court sent him altogether adrift upon the world.

"We may still have a run from Poulnaroe, if the gentleman chooses to come on," said a voice coming up behind with a sharp trot. It was Tom O'Connor.

"Wherever the hounds go, I'll follow," said I.

"Then come on to Poulnaroe," said Mr. O'Connor. I trotted on quickly by his side, and before we reached the cover had managed to slip in something about Sir P—C—.

"What the deuce !" said he—"what ! a friend of Sir P——'s ? Why the deuce didn't you tell me so ? What are you doing down here ? Where are you staying ?" etc., etc., etc.

At Poulnaroe, we found a fox ; but before we did so Mr. O'Connor had asked me over to Castle Conon : and this he did in such a way that there was no possibility of refusing him, or, I should rather say, of disobeying him. For the invitation came quite in the tone of a command.

"You'll come to us, of course, when the day is over; and—let me see—we're near Ballyglass now, but the inn will be right away in our direction. Just send word for them to send your things to Castle Conor."

"But they're all about and unpacked," said I.

"Never mind—write a note and say what you want now, and go and get the rest to-morrow yourself. Here's Patsey: Patsey, run into Ballyglass for this gentleman at once. Now don't be long, for the chances are we shall find here." And then, after giving some further hurried instructions, he left me to write a line in pencil to the innkeeper's wife on the bank of a ditch.

This I accordingly did: "Send my small portmanteau," I said, "and all my black dress clothes and shirts and socks and all that, and, above all, my dressing unings which are on the little table, and the satin neck-handkerchief, and, what ever you do, mind you send my *pumps*;" and I underscored the latter word, for Jack O'Conor, when his father left me, went on pressing the invitation. "My sisters are going to get up a dance," said he, "and if you are fond of that kind of thing perhaps we can amuse you." Now in those days I was very fond of

dancing—and very fond of young ladies too, and therefore glad enough to learn that Tom O'Connor had daughters as well as sons. On this account I was very particular in underscoring the word pumps.

“And hurry, you young devil!” Jack O'Connor said to Patsey.

“I have told him to take the portmanteau over in a car,” said I.

“All right; then you'll find it there on our arrival.”

“We had an excellent run, in which I may make bold to say that I did not acquit myself badly. I stuck very close to the hounds, as did the whole O'Connor brood; and when the fellow contrived to earth himself, as he did, I received their compliments on my horse, which is the nearest approach to praise which one fox-hunter ever gives to another.

“We'll buy that fellow of you before we let you go,” said Peter, the younger son.

“I advise you to look sharp after your money if you sell him to my brother,” said Jack.

And then we trotted slowly off to Castle Connor, which, however, was by no means near to us.

“We have ten miles to go—good Irish miles,” said the father. “I don't know that I ever re-

member a fox from Poulnaroe taking that line before."

"He wasn't a Poulnaroe fox," said Peter.

"I don't know that," said Jack ; and then **they** debated that question hotly.

Our horses were very tired, and it was late before we reached Mr. O'Connor's house. That getting home from hunting, with a thoroughly wearied animal who has no longer sympathy or example to carry him on, is very tedious work. In the present instance, I had company with me ; but when a man is alone—when his horse toes at every ten steps—when the night is dark and the rain pouring, and there are yet eight miles of road to be conquered—at such times a man is almost apt to swear that he will give up hunting.

At last we were in the Castle Conor stableyard, for we had approached the house by some backway ; as we entered by a door leading through a wilderness of back passages, Mr. Conor said out aloud :

"Now boys, remember I sit down to dinner in twenty minutes." And then, turning expressly to me, he laid his hand kindly upon my shoulder, and said, "I hope you will make yourself quite at home at Castle Conor ; and whatever you do, don't keep

us waiting for dinner. You can dress in twenty minutes I suppose ?”

“In ten,” said I, glibly.

“That’s well. Jack and Peter will show you your room.” And so he turned away and left us.

My two young friends made their way into the front hall, and thence into the drawing-room, and I followed them. We were all dressed in pink, and had waded deep through bog and mud. I did not exactly know whither I was being led in this guise, but I soon found myself in the presence of two young ladies, and of a girl about thirteen years of age.

“My sisters,” said Jack, introducing me very laconically. “Miss O’Conor, Miss Kate O’Conor, Miss Tizzy O’Conor.”

“My name is not Tizzy,” said the younger ; “it’s Eliza. How do you do, Sir ? I hope you’ve had a fine hunt. Was papa well up, Jack ?”

Jack did not condescend to answer this question, but asked one of the older girls whether my things had come, and whether a room had been made ready for me.

“Oh yes,” said Miss O’Conor, “they have come, I know, for I saw them brought into the house ; and I hope Mr. Green will find every thing comfortable.”

As she said this I thought I saw a slight smile steal across her remarkably pretty mouth.

They were both exceedingly pretty girls. Fanny, the elder, wore long glossy curls—for I write, O reader, of by-gone days, as long ago as that when young ladies wore curls, if it pleased them so to do, and gentlemen danced in pumps, with black handkerchiefs round their necks—yes, long black, or nearly black, silken curls; and then she had such eyes!—I never knew whether they were most wicked or most bright; and her face was all dimples and each dimple was laden with laughter and laden with love. Kate was probably the prettier girl of the two, but on the whole, not so attractive. She was fairer than her sister, and wore her hair in braids, and was also somewhat more demure in her manner.

In spite of the special injunctions of Mr. O'Connor, Sen., it was impossible not to loiter for five minutes over the drawing-room fire talking to these hours; more especially as I seemed to know them intimately by intuition *before* half the five minutes was over. They were so easy, so pretty, so graceful, so kind; they seemed to take it so much as a matter of course that I should stand there talking in my red coat and muddy boots

"Well, do go and dress yourselves," at last said Fanny, pretending to speak to her brothers, but looking more especially at me. "You know how mad papa will be. And remember, Mr. Green, we expect great things from your dancing to-night. Your coming just at this time is such a godsend!"

And again that *souffron* of a smile passed over her face.

I hurried up to my room, Peter and Jack coming with me to the door.

"Is every thing right?" said Peter, looking among the towels and water-jugs.

"They've given you a decent fire, for a wonder," said Jack, stirring up the red-hot turf which blazed in the grate.

"All right as a trivet," said I.

"And look alive, like a good fellow," said Jack. We had scowled at each other in the morning, as very young men do when they are strangers, and now, after a few hours, we were intimate friends.

I immediately turned to my work, and was gratified to find that all my things were laid out ready for dress. My portmanteau had, of course, come open, as my keys were in my pocket; and therefore some of the excellent servants of the house had been

able to save me all the trouble of unpacking. There was my shirt hanging before the fire ; my black clothes were spread upon the bed, my socks and collar and handkerchief beside them ; my brushes were on the toilet-table, and every thing prepared exactly as though my own man had been there. How nice !

I immediately went to work at getting off my spurs and boots, and then proceeded to loosen the buttons at my knees. In doing this I sat down in the arm-chair, which had been drawn up for me opposite to the fire. But what was the object on which my eyes then fell ?—the objects I should rather say.

Immediately in front of my chair was placed, just ready for my feet, an enormous pair of shooting-boots—half-boots, made to lace up round the ankles, with thick double-leather feet, and each bearing half a stone of iron in the shape of nails and heel pieces. I had superintended the making of these shoes in Burlington Arcade with the greatest diligence. I was never a good shot, and like some other sportsmen, intended to make up for my deficiency in performance by the excellence of my sporting apparel. “Those nails are not large enough.” But when the

boots came home they struck even me as being too heavy, too metalsome. "He-he-he!" laughed the boot-boy, as he turned up the soles for me to look at. It may therefore be imagined of what nature were the articles which were thus set out for my evening's dancing.

And then the way in which they were placed! When I saw this, the conviction flew across my mind like a flash of lightning that the preparation had been made under other eyes than those of the servant. The great big boots were placed so prettily before the chair, and the strings of each were made to dangle down at the sides, as though just ready for tying. They seemed to say—the boots did—"Now make haste; we at any rate are ready; you cannot say that you were kept waiting for us." No mere servant's hand had ever enabled a pair of boots to laugh at one so completely.

But what was I to do? I rushed at the small portmanteau, thinking that my pumps also might be there. The woman surely could not have been such a fool as to send me those tons of iron for my evening wear! But alas! alas! no pumps were there. There was nothing else in the way of covering for my feet; not even a pair of slippers.

And now what was I to do? The absolute magnitude of my misfortune only loomed upon me by degrees. The twenty minutes allowed by that stern old paterfamilias was already gone, and I had done nothing toward dressing. And indeed it was impossible that I should do any thing that would be of avail. I could not go down to dinner in my stocking feet, nor could I put on my black dress trowsers over a pair of mud-painted top boots. As for those iron-soled horrors—and then I gave one of them a kick with the side of my bare foot which sent it half-way under the bed.

But what was I to do? I began washing myself and brushing my hair with this horrid weight upon my mind. My first plan was to go to bed, and send down word that I had been taken suddenly ill in the stomach; then to rise early in the morning and get away unobserved. But by such a course of action I would lose all chance of any further acquaintance with those pretty girls. That they were already aware of the extent of my predicament, and were now enjoying it—of that I was quite sure.

What if I boldly put on the shooting boots, and clattered down to dinner in them? What if I took the bull by the horns, and made myself one in the

joke? This might be very well for the dinner, but it would be but a bad joke for me when the hour for dancing came. And, alas! I felt that I lacked the courage. It is not every man that can walk down to dinner, in a strange house full of ladies, wearing such boots as those I have described.

Should I not attempt to borrow a pair? This, all the world will say, should have been my first idea. But I have not yet mentioned that I am myself a large-boned man, and that my feet are especially well developed. I had never for a moment entertained a hope that I should find any one in that house whose boot I could wear. But at last I rang the bell; I would send for Jack, and if every thing else failed, I would communicate my grief to him.

I had to ring twice before any body came. The servants, I well knew, were putting the dinner on the table. At last a man entered the room, dressed in rather shabby black, whom I afterward learned to be the butler.

"What is your name, my friend?" said I, determined to make an ally of the man.

"My name? why, Larry to be sure, yer honor. And the masther is out of his sinses in a hurry, because yer honor don't come down."

"Is he though? Well now, Larry, tell me this, which of all the gentlemen in the house has got the largest feet?"

"Is it the largest feet, yer honor?" said Larry, altogether surprised by my question.

"Yes; the largest feet." And then I proceeded to explain to him my misfortune. He took up, first my top boot, and then the shooting boot, in looking at which he gazed with wonder at the nails, and then he glanced at my feet, measuring them with his eye; and after this he pronounced his opinion.

"Yer honor couldn't wear a morsel of leather belonging to ere a one of 'em, young or ould. There niver was a foot like that yet among the O'Conors."

"But are there no strangers staying here?"

"There's three or four on 'em come in to dinner; but they'll be wanting their own boots, I'm thinking. And there's young Misther Dollor, he's come to stay. But Lord love you"—and he again looked at the enormous extent which lay between the heel and the toe of the shooting apparatus which he still held in his hand—"I niver see sich a foot as that in the whole barony," he said, "barring my own."

Now Larry was a large man, much larger altogether than myself; and as he said this I looked down in-

voluntarily at his feet, or rather at his foot, for as he stood I could only see one. And then a sudden hope filed my heart. On that foot there glittered a shoe—not indeed such as were my own, which were now resting ingloriously at Ballyglass while they were so sorely needed at Castle Conor, but one which I could wear before ladies without shame, and in my present frame of mind with infinite contentment.

“Let me look at that one of your own,” said I to the man, as though it were merely a subject for experimental inquiry. Larry, accustomed to obedience, took off the shoe and handed it to me. My own foot was immediately in it, and I found that it fitted me like a glove.

“And now the other,” said I, not smiling, for a smile would have put him on his guard ; but somewhat sternly, so that that habit of obedience should not desert him at this perilous moment. And then I stretched out my hand.

“But yer honor can’t keep ’em you know,” said he. “I haven’t the ghost of another shoe to my foot.” But I only looked more sternly than before, and still held out my hand. Custom prevailed. Larry stooped down slowly, looking at me the while, and pulling off the other slipper handed it to me with

much hesitation. Alas, as I put it to my foot I found that it was old, and worn, and irredeemably down at heel; that it was in fact no counterpart at all to that other one which was to do duty as its fellow. But nevertheless I put my foot into it, and felt that a descent to the drawing-room was now possible.

"But yer honor will give 'em back to a poor man?" said Larry, almost crying. "The masther's mad this minnute becace the dinner's not up. And, glory be to God, only listhen to that!" and, as he spoke, a tremendous peal rang out from some bell down stairs that had evidently been shaken by an angry hand.

"Larry," said I—and I endeavored to assume a look of very grave importance as I spoke—"I look to you to assist me in this matter."

"Och, wirra sthrue thin, and will you let me go? Jist listen to that!" and another angry peal rang out, loud and repeated.

"If you do as I ask you," I continued, "you shall be well rewarded. Look here! look at these boots," and I held up the shooting-shoes, new from Burlington Arcade, "They cost thirty shillings—thirty shillings! and I will give them to you for the loan of this pair of slippers."

"They'd be no use at all to me, yer honor ; not the laist use in life."

"You could do with them very well for to-night, and then you could sell them. And here are ten shillings besides ;" and I held out half a sovereign, which the poor fellow took into his hand.

I waited no further parley, but immediately writhed out of the room. With one foot I was sufficiently pleased ; as regarded that I felt that I had overcome my difficulty. But the other was not so satisfactory. Whenever I attempted to lift it from the ground the horrid slipper would fall off, or only just hang by the toe. As for dancing, that would be out of the question.

"Oh murther, murther !" sang out Larry, as he heard me going down stairs ; "what will I do at all? Tare and 'ounds! there—he's at it agin as mad as blazes?" This last exclamation had reference to another peal, which was evidently the work of the master's hand.

I confess I was not quite comfortable as I walked down stairs. In the first place, I was nearly half an hour late, and I knew from the sign of the peals that had sounded, that my slowness had already been made the subject of strong remarks.

And then my left shoe went flop, flop, on every alternate step of the stairs ; by no exertion of my foot in drawing up of my toe, could I induce it to remain permanently fixed upon my foot. But over and above, and worse than all this, was the conviction, strong upon my mind, that I should become a subject of merriment to the girls as soon as I entered the room. They would understand the cause of my distress ; and probably at this moment were expecting to hear me clatter through the stone hall with those odious metal boots.

However, I hurried down and entered the drawing-room, determined to keep my position near the door, so that I might have as little as possible to do on entering, and as little as possible in going out. But I had other difficulties in store for me. I had not as yet been introduced to Mrs. O'Connor, nor to Miss O'Connor, the squire's unmarried sister.

"Upon my word I thought you were never coming," said Mr. O'Connor, as soon as he saw me. "It is just one hour since we entered the house. Jack, I wish you would find out what has come to that fellow Larry !" and again he rang the bell. He was too angry, or it might be too impatient, to go through the ceremony of introducing me to any body.

I saw that the two girls looked at me very sharply ; I stood however, at the back of an arm-chair, so that no one could see my feet. But that little imp Tizzy walked round deliberately, looked at my heels, and then walked back again. It was clear that she was in the secret.

There were eight or ten people in the room, but I was too much fluttered to notice well who they were.

"Mamma," said Miss O'Connor the elder, "let me introduce Mr. Green to you.

It luckily happened that Mrs. O'Connor was on the same side of the fire as myself, and I was able to take the hand which she offered me without coming round into the middle of the circle. Mrs. O'Connor was a little woman, apparently of not much importance in the world ; but, if one might judge from first appearances, very good-natured.

"And my aunt Die, Mr. Green," said Kate, pointing to a very straight-backed, grim-looking lady, who occupied a corner of a sofa on the opposite side of the hearth. I knew that politeness required that I should walk across the room and make acquaintance with her ; but, under the the existing circumstances, how was I to obey the dictates of politeness,

I was determined, therefore, to stand my ground, and merely bowed from a respectful distance at Miss O'Connor. In so doing I made an enemy who never deserted me during the whole of my intercourse with the family. But for her, who knows who might have been sitting opposite to me as I now write?

"Upon my word, Mr. Green, the ladies will expect much from an Adonis who takes so long over his toilet!" said Tom O'Connor, in that cruel tone of banter which he so well knew how to use.

"You forget, father, that men in London can't jump in and out of their clothes as quick as we wild Irishmen!" said Jack.

"Mr. Green knows that we expect a great deal from him this evening. I hope you polk well, Mr. Green?" said Kate.

I muttered something about never dancing; but I knew that what I said was inaudible.

"I don't think Mr. Green will dance," said Tizzy; "at least, not much!" The impudence of that child was, I think, unparalleled by any that I have ever witnessed.

"But in the name of all that's holy, why don't we have dinner?" And Mr. O'Connor thundered at the door. "Larry! Larry! Larry!" he screamed.

"Yes, yer honor; it'll be all right in two seconds!" answered Larry, from some bottomless abyss. "Tare an' ages! what'll I do at all?" I heard him continuing, as he made his way into the hall. Oh what a clatter he made upon the pavement, for it was all stone! And how the drops of perspiration stood upon my brow as I listened to him!

And then there was a pause, for the man had gone into the dining-room. I could see now that Mr. O'Connor was becoming very angry; and Jack, the eldest son—oh how often he and I have laughed over all this since!—left the drawing-room for the second time. Immediately afterward Larry's footsteps were again heard hurrying across the hall; and then there was a great slither, and an exclamation, and the noise of a fall! and I could plainly hear poor Larry's head strike against the stone floor.

"Ochone! ochone!" he cried, at the top of his voice. "I'm murthered with 'em now, and d—'em for boots! St. Peter be good to me!"

There was a general rush into the hall, and I was carried with the stream. The poor fellow who had broken his head would be sure to tell them how

I had robbed him of his shoes. The coachman was already helping him up, and Peter good-naturedly lent a hand.

"What on earth is the matter?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"He must be tipsy," whispered Miss O'Connor the maiden sister.

"I ain't tipsy at all, thin," said Larry, getting up, and rubbing the back of his head and sundry other parts of his body. "Tipsy, indeed!" And then he added when he was quite upright, "The dinner is sarved—at last."

And he bore it all without telling! "I'll give that fellow a guinea to-morrow morning," said I to myself, "if it's the last that I have in the world."

I shall never forget the countenances of the Misses O'Connor as Larry scrambled up, cursing the unfortunate boots. "What on earth has he got on?" said Mr. O'Connor. "Sorrow take 'em for shoes!" ejaculated Larry. But his spirit was good, and he said not a word to betray me.

We all then went in to dinner as we best could. It was useless for us to go back into the drawing-room that each might seek his own partner. Mr. O'Connor, "the master," not caring much for the

girls who were around him, and being already half-beside himself with the confusion and delay, led the way by himself. I, as a stranger, should have given my arm to Mrs. O'Connor; but as it was I took her eldest daughter instead, and contrived to shuffle along into the dining-room without exciting much attention; and when there, I found myself happily placed between Kate and Fanny.

"I never knew any thing so awkward," said Fanny. "I declare I can't conceive what has come to our old servant Larry. He's generally the most precise person in the world, and now he is nearly an hour late—and then he tumbles down in the hall."

"I am afraid I am responsible for the delay," said I.

"But not for the tumble, I suppose," said Kate, from the other side. I felt that I blushed up to the eyes, but I did not dare to enter into an explanation.

"Tom," said Tizzy, addressing her father across the table, "I hope you had a good run to-day." It did seem odd to me that a young lady should call her father Tom, but such was the fact.

"Why, pretty well," said Mr. O'Connor.

"And I hope you were up with the hounds."

"You may ask Mr. Green that. He, at any rate, was with them, and therefore he can tell you."

"Oh, he wasn't before you ; I know. No Englishman could get before you ; I am quite sure of that."

"Don't you be impertinent, miss," said Kate. "You can easily see, Mr. Green, that papa spoils my sister Eliza."

"Do you hunt in top boots, Mr. Green?" said Tizzy.

To this I made no answer. She would have drawn me into a conversation about my feet in half a minute, and the slightest allusion to the subject threw me into a fit of perspiration.

"Are you fond of hunting, Miss O'Connor?" asked I, blindly hurrying into any other subject of conversation.

Miss O'Connor owned that she was fond of hunting—just a little—only papa would not allow it. When the hounds met any where within reach of Castle Conor she and Kate would ride out to look at them ; and if papa was not there that day—an omission of rare occurrence—they would ride a few fields with the hounds.

"But he lets Tizzy keep with them the whole day," said she, whispering.

"And has Tizzy a pony of her own?"

"Oh yes, Tizzy has every thing. She's papa's pet, you know."

"And whose pet are you?" I asked.

"Oh, I am nobody's pet; unless sometimes Jack makes a pet of me, when he's in a good humor. Do you make pets of your sisters, Mr. Green?"

"I have none; but if I had, I should not make pets of them."

"Not of your own sisters?"

"No. As for myself, I'd sooner make a pet of my friend's sister—a great deal."

"How very unnatural!" said Miss O'Connor, with the prettiest look of surprise imaginable.

"Not at all unnatural, I think," said I, looking tenderly and lovingly into her face. Where does one find girls so pretty, so easy, so sweet, so talkative as the Irish girls? And then, with all their talking and all their ease, who ever hears of their misbehaving? They certainly love flirting as they also love dancing; but they flirt without mischief and without malice.

I had now quite forgotten my misfortune, and

was beginning to think how well I should like to have Fanny O'Connor for my wife. In this frame of mind I was bending over toward her, as a servant took away a plate from the other side, when a sepulchral note sounded in my ear. It was like the *memento mori* of the old Roman—as through some one pointed, in the midst of my bliss, to the sword hanging over me by a thread. It was the voice of Larry whispering in his agony, just above my head.

"They's destroying my poor feet intirely—intirely; so they is. I can't bear it much longer, yer honor."

I had committed murder, like Macbeth, and now my Banquo had come to disturb me at my feast, as another Banquo had once disturbed Macbeth.

"What is it he says to you?" asked Fanny.

"Oh, nothing," I answered, once more in my misery.

"There seems to be some point of confidence between you and our Larry," she remarked.

"Oh, no," said I, quite confused. "Not at all."

"You need not be ashamed of it. Half the gentlemen in the country have their confidences with Larry, and some of the ladies too, I can tell you.

He was born in this house, and never lived any where else ; and I am sure he has a larger circle of acquaintances than any one else in it."

I could not recover my self-possession for the next ten minutes. Whenever Larry was on our side of the table I was afraid that he was coming to me with another agonized whisper. When he was opposite I could not but watch him as he hobbled in his misery. It was evident that the boots were too tight for him ; and had they been made throughout of iron, they could not have been less capable of yielding to the feet. I pitied him from the bottom of my heart ; and I pitied myself also, wishing that I was well in my bed up stairs with some feigned malady, so that Larry might have had his own again.

And then, for a moment, I missed him from the room. He had doubtless gone to relieve his tortured feet in the servants' hall, and as he did so was cursing my cruelty. But what mattered it? Let him curse. If he would only stay away, and do that, I would appease his wrath, when we were alone together, with pecuniary satisfaction.

But there was no such rest in store for me.

"Larry! Larry!" shouted Mr. O'Connor "where

on earth is the fellow gone to?" They were all cousins at the table except myself, and Mr. O'Connor was not therefore restrained by any feeling of ceremony. "There is something wrong with that fellow to-day. What is it, Jack?"

"Upon my word, Sir, I don't know," said Jack.

"I think he must be tipsy," whispered Miss O'Connor, the maiden sister, who always sat at her brother's left hand. But a whisper though it was, it was audible all down the table.

"No, ma'am; it ain't dhrink at all," said the coachman. "It's his feet as does it."

"His feet!" shouted Tom O'Connor.

"Yes, I know it's his feet," said that horrid Tizzy. "He's got on great thick, nailed boots. It was that that made him tumble down in the hall."

I glanced at each side of me, and could see that there was a certain consciousness expressed on the face of each of my two neighbors. On Kate's mouth there was decidedly a smile, or rather, perhaps, the slightest possible inclination that way; whereas, on Fanny's part, I thought I was something like a rising sorrow at my distress. So, at least, I flattered myself.

"Send him back into the room immediately,"

said Tom, who looked at me as though he had some idea that I had introduced all this confusion into his household. What should I do? Would it not be best for me to make a clean breast of it before them all? But alas! I lacked the courage.

The coachman went out, and then we were left for five minutes without any servant, and Mr. O'Conor the while became more and more savage. I attempted to say a word to Fanny, but failed. *Vox faucibus hæsit.*

"I don't think he has got any others," said Tizzy; "at least, none others left."

On the whole, I am glad that I did not marry into the family, as I could not have endured that girl to stay in my house as a sister-in-law.

"Where the d—— has that other fellow gone to?" said Tom. "Jack, do go out and see what is the matter. If any body is drunk, send for me."

"Oh, there's nobody drunk," said Tizzy.

Jack went out, and the coachman returned; but what was done and said I hardly remember. The whole room seemed to swim round and round; and as far as I can recollect, the company sat mute, neither eating nor drinking. Presently Jack returned.

"It's all right," said he.

I always liked Jack. At the present moment he just looked toward me and laughed slightly.

"All right?" said Tom. "But is the fellow coming?"

"We can do with Richard, I suppose?" said Jack.

"No, I can't do with Richard," said the father. "And I will know what it all means. Where is that fellow Larry?"

Larry had been standing just outside the door, and now he entered gently as a mouse. No sound came from his footfall, nor was there in his face that look of pain which it had worn for the last fifteen minutes. But he was not the less abashed, frightened, and unhappy.

"What is all this about, Larry?" said his master, turning to him. "I insist upon knowing."

"Och, thin, Mr. Green, yer honor, I wouldn't be afther telling agin yer honor; indeed I would not, thin, av the masther would only let me hould my tongue." And he looked across at me, deprecating my anger.

"Mr. Green?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"Yes, yer honor. It's all along of his honor's thick boots;" and Larry, stepping backward toward

the door lifted them up from some corner, and coming well forward, exposed them, with the soles uppermost, to the whole table.

"And that's not all, yer honor; but they've squeeze the very toes of me into a jelly."

There was now a loud laugh, in which Jack, and Peter, and Fanny, and Kate, and Tizzy all joined, as, too, did Mr. O'Connor, and I also, myself after a while.

"Whose boots are they?" demanded Miss O'Connor, Senior, with her severest tone and grimmest accent.

"Deed, thin, and the divil may have them for me," answered Larry. "They wor Mr. Green's, but the likes of him won't wear them ag'in afther the likes of me—barring he wanted them very particular," added he, remembering his own pumps.

I began muttering something, feeling that the time had come when I must tell the tale. But Jack, with great good-nature, took up the story and told it so well that I hardly suffered in the telling.

"And that's it!" said Tom O'Connor, laughing till I thought he would have fallen from his chair. "So you've got Larry's shoes on—"

"And very well he fills them," said Jack.

"And it's his honor that's welcome to 'em," said Larry, grinning from ear to ear now that he saw that the "masther" was once more in a good humor.

"I hope they'll be nice shoes for dancing," said Kate.

"Only there's one down at the heel, I know," said Tizzy.

"The servant's shoes!" This was an exclamation made by the maiden lady, and intended apparently only for her brother's ear. But it was clearly audible by all the party.

"Better that than to have no dinner," said Peter.

"But what are you to do about the dancing?" said Fanny, with an air of dismay in her face, which flattered me with an idea that she did care whether I danced or not.

In the mean time, Larry, now as happy as an emperor, was tripping round the room without any shoes to encumber him as he withdrew the plates from the table.

"And it's his honor that's welcome to 'em," said he again, as he pulled off the table-cloth with a flourish. "And why wouldn't he, and he able to folly the hounds better un any Englishman that iver was in these parts before?—anyways, so Mick says."

Now Mick was the huntsman, and this little scrap of eulogy from Larry went far toward curing my grief. I had ridden well to the hounds that day, and I knew it.

There was nothing more said about the shoes, and I was soon again at my ease, although Miss O'Connor did say something about the impropriety of Larry walking about in his stocking-feet. The ladies, however, soon withdrew, to my sorrow, for I was getting on swimmingly with Fanny, and then we gentlemen gathered round the fire and filled our glasses.

In about ten minutes a very light tap was heard, the door was opened to the extent of three inches, and a female voice which I readily recognized called to Jack.

Jack went out, and in a second or two put his head back into the room and called to me: "Green," he said, "just step here a moment; there's a good fellow." I went out, and there I found Fanny standing with her brother.

"Here are the girls at their wits' ends," said he, "about your dancing. So Fanny has put a boy on one of the horses and proposes that you should send another line to Mrs. Meehan, at Ballyglass. It's only ten miles, and he'll be back in two hours."

I need hardly say that I acted in conformity with this advice. I went into Mr. O'Connor's back room with Jack and his sister, and there scribbled a note. It was delightful to feel how intimate I was with them, and how anxious they were to make me happy.

"And we won't begin till they come," said Fanny.

"Oh, Miss O'Connor, pray don't wait," said I.

"Oh, but we will," she answered. "You have your wine to drink, and then there's the tea; and then we will have a song or two. I'll spin it out, see if I don't!" And so we went to the front door, where the boy was already on his horse—her own nag, as I afterward found.

"And Patsey," said she, "ride for your life, now; and Patsey, whatever you do, don't come back without Mr. Green's pumps—his dancing shoes, you know."

And in about two hours the pumps did arrive, and I don't think that I ever spent a pleasanter evening or got more satisfaction out of a pair of shoes. They had not been two minutes on my feet before Larry was carrying a tray of negus across the room in those which I had worn at dinner.

"The Dillon girls **are** going to stay here," said

Fanny, as I wished her good-night at two o'clock, "and we'll have dancing every evening as long as you remain."

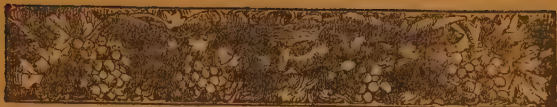
"But I shall leave to-morrow," said I.

"Indeed you won't! Papa will take care of that."

And so he did. "You'd better go over to Bailly-glass yourself to-morrow," said he, "and collect your own things; there's no knowing else what you may have to borrow from Larry."

I staid there three weeks, and in the middle of the third I thought that everything would be arranged between me and Fanny. But the aunt interfered; and in about a twelvemonth after my adventures she consented to make a more fortunate man happy for his life.

CHARLES LEVER.



THE LOAN OF A LYRE.



PRETTY piece of business, Mrs. Barcarole—a very pretty piece of business upon my soul—and I a husband and father of a family ! ”

“ What are you talking about, my dear ? ”

“ If you want to know, please to fix your naked eye upon this little bijou of a communication, just received per this morning’s post.”

Mrs. Barcarole stopped washing the breakfast silver, dried her fingers, and taking the letter from my hand, read aloud :

“ Melibœus Barcarole, Esq.

“ IMMORTAL BARD—Pardon the *unlaurelled* incense-burner before your lyric altar of *undying* fame, who thus informally, and (but for her uncontrollable enthusiasm) *inexcusably* ad-

dresses you. Though the liberty I take has, perhaps, *no parallel* in that circle where *frigid ceremony* wields her glacial sceptre, in your *habitual benignity* remember, I pray you, that you sit on that *celestial pinnacle* of fame where you are less *your own* than *all mankind's*, and even a *humble* heart like my own, whose slender strings have been thrilled by your songful breath, may claim a part in you.

"I need not say that, with *outwelling* eyes and *palpitating* bosom, I have read *every line* which your *wondrous* pen has contributed to the age's symphony. Still more, oh divinest of living bards! I know each *word* of *rapture* by heart—and sleep with Ticknor's blue and gold edition of you pressed close to that heart, nightly. In the name of *all Time*, let me thank you, Sir, for those pulses of *ecstasy* with which you have stirred its *eternally resounding* corridors.

"With what *speechless sympathy* do I enter into your sorrows! As I write, my tears stain this sheet, confessing my maiden weakness; for I have just come from the perusal of that *bottomless* utterance of lonely grief and passion recorded at page 310 of the second volume of your 'Antiphonal Antistrophics.' Need I say that I mean 'The Wail of the World-weary Wanderer?' It is no vain compliment when I say that *Homer*, *Dante*, and *Tupper* will not survive one verse of the many which bathed me in tears. 'Tis this:

"Headlong out of heavenly blisses
Hurled to fathomless abysses,
Dream I still of feeling kisses
Kissing me forever more;
Like the moonbeam's sparry shiver,
Quenched upon a midnight river,
Slides away the airy giver,
And in the darkness horrid
I dash my burning forehead
On the adamantine floor."

"But I trespass on your time. I will only say a word more.

You end that poem with this aspiration, 'Oh for one fountain-heart, whereof my own might drink!' I believe it is *my* mission to be *that* heart—to comfort your wretchedness—to bind up your wounded spirit.

"*All* I wish is, to gaze into your *deep blue eyes*—to walk the same *violet-scented* turf—to breathe the same air with you. I will, therefore, be with you in that 'pastoral solitude beyond the rules of earth' (described so affectingly on your 17th page) on Monday next, by the 5 o'clock, P. M., express from New York (having to wait till then for my new mantilla from Bulpin's). With eternal ardor, your respondent dual soul,

"LILLIE TAYLOR."

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Barcarole, opening those large brown eyes of hers, out of which I had so often drawn my inspiration, until they equalled in size of aperture that other vessel wherein I dipped my quills. "And what do you mean to do about it."

"Rum-tum-tum-tum-tiddy, rumtumptiddydo—"

"What do you mean to do, I say, dear?"

"Rum-tum-tiddy—oh, beg your pardon, love—I mean to—well, that is—really I haven't the least idea."

"Well, I must say, *I* should know what to do under such circumstances if *I* were a man. I'd have a policeman ready at the cars, and have her arrested for bigamy, or whatever it is that they call running away with another lady's husband."

I intimated to Mrs. Barcarole that bigamy might

be a somewhat difficult charge to sustain against my correspondent on the existing evidence: moreover, that I was not run away with yet, and, in all human probability, should not be—so long, I added, with a glance of amorous sweetness, as I possessed a niche in the heart of such a charming woman already.

Which mollified Mrs. Barcarole considerably.

“What sort of a creature do you think she is, this scandalous person?” asked my wife.

“I suppose her to be,” I answered, “a tall, thin, yet sympathetic young woman, whose tendrils were, some forty years ago, more or less torn from a robust male support, with a tendency to spectacles, short sleeves, low neck, and singing ‘Go, forget me!’ to a pleuritic piano. I fancy, also, that she is fond of Poe, Shelley, and—I would not be so vain before anybody but you—Barcarole. Add to this prescription, an appetite for young clergymen who need sisterly sympathy and slippers, and I guess you have her.”

“She must be very ugly, too,” said my wife.

“Eminently so, of course,” I assented.

“And she may stay a fortnight.”

“Oh, six months, at the least; there will be no

getting rid of her. It always was agony for women to tear themselves away from me."

"Impudence! Something prompt must be done, then."

"I agree with you, my love. I will try to settle on the exact thing, and let you know by dinner-time. Till then I must weed my strawberries. By-by, dear."

II.

I was the poet Barcarole—laying claim, I fancy, to something like a transatlantic reputation, having been reviewed in the *Athenæum* as the author of "Another mass of American stuff." Daily was I solicited for my autograph. I am extravagant enough to believe that I could have made a good thing out of my hair, if I had cut it up, like the submarine cable, into lengths to suit purchasers, and advertised it to my admiring public.

It is pleasant to be famous. I like to have men poke one another in the ribs, when they see me on a railroad car, and say, "There he is—that's *Barcarole*!" I am fond of being called on to write sonnets for great occasions. I love to see pretty girls absorbed in my last edition, at watering-places and on steamboats.

But in some respects I sit on "a painful peak." It is not pleasant to think that the world is interested in the set of one's night-cap, or would listen breathlessly to a lecture on your peculiar method of cutting up a water-melon. There is a possibility of conceiving some things which a respectable citizen, however famous, might wish to keep private—to do, with the candle of publicity blown out, and society at large *not* looking through the key-hole. I have never been able to do that class of things in a frame of any calmness. There is a jealousy of observation—a nervous sense of being noteworthy—that makes a great poet go to bed, rise, put on his cravat, as if the parquet of Burton's were just the other side of the wash-stand.

Then — probably, because my poems were so wondrously life-like and graphic—it never could be understood by the general reader how I was not *in earnest* in everything I wrote. I am not "A Deserted Soul;" yet, if I choose, cannot I write "The Battle-cry" of that unfortunate being, without disagreeably identifying myself with him? No, I can't. Can I consistently weave into lyric symphony "The Plea of the Plaster-cast Man?" No; for if I do, the next review notice of my life asserts, upon

abundant authority, that I “rose out of the greatest obscurity, having originally been a vendor of gypsum praying Samuels and poll-parrots, whose talents were first discovered under the following circumstances,” etc. And there is not a dyspeptic young person who does not cherish me as the representative of sublimely-gifted wretchedness, on account of those love-lorn breathings which I, the happy husband and father, have uttered histrionically in my songs and plays.

Melibœus Barcarole—immortal bard! I do not know whether to call you an unfortunate dog or not, in this fame which you have won. But certainly, of all inflictions that follow glory, sure never was one severer than the present. A woman for whose craze your genius was responsible, coming to stay an indefinite time with you, in an attitude of adoration!

My wife might not have a spare room convenient. Oh, no matter! had I not written,

’Tis sweet to sleep beneath the stars,
With moonbeams for your curtain bars?

The young woman would therefore come, prepared to find me eschewing the conventional horse-hair and feathers, and boarding out-doors altogether. We might not have any cake in the house—a mor-

tification which to the mind of Mrs. Barcarole has no parallel among the woes of life. No matter, again.

The forest berries our food shall be,
Our dishes the bark of the white birch-tree.

Had I not written it? Evidently there would be no way of discouraging the young woman.

This train of meditation was revolving in my brain as I weeded the strawberries. It got to be near mid-day. I had cleaned two beds, and was half-way through a third, but without settling on any course of prompt action.

I stopped working, and leaned to rest on my hoe-handle, when, whom should I see strolling into the garden but my nephew, Melibœus Barcarole, Jun., a youth of parts, who was spending a month with me for the benefit of his health. The history of that young man was a sad one. He was the oldest child of rich but honest parents, and had risen from the most extreme opulence to a very honorable position among the intellectual men of society. By indomitable energy he had conquered the disadvantages of wealth, and was a hard-working, studious, and useful fellow. Though the circumstances of his family were such that I have known them compelled to

subsist on turtle soup and meringues for nearly a week at a time, and their only way of keeping off the rigors of a severe winter consisted of a few black, poisonous holes in the floor, my nephew had grown into a vigorous, healthy, and handsome lad. A striking instance of what manly resolution may do against all the obstacles of fortune.

But of late a sad affliction had overshadowed him. He was evidently passing through that trying disorder—that teething complaint of the grown-up infant just weaned from tops and paper-kites—the first love. And he had it very hard. To such a degree did it affect his appetite and sleep that his parents thought that my country fare would be a good change for him, and so expressed him to me, with orders to amuse him till the season opened at the Springs.

Now, as Melibœus strolled into the garden, as aforesaid, a thought struck me. Might not the study of this interesting woman, run bard-mad, prove a diversion to him? Might he not at the same time rid me of my difficulty, and occupy himself healthfully in the analysis of the phenomenon?

Wandering with clasped hands, and a face full of the gentlest Idyllic melancholy, the youth approach-

ed me. Until he had stepped right upon my most fruitful clusters, he did not see I was there. Then he noticed me, and started back.

"Melibœus," said I, "you are bored in this rural quiet—confess it, boy!"

"Shall I tell you the truth? I believe I am—immensely."

"So I thought. Well, it's perfectly natural. You meet a very pretty girl at the Philharmonics—she returns your dazzled gaze with a half-venturous glance, followed by a blush—your soul bathes in her till the last echo of Tannhauser dies away—you and she depart your several ways—you never see her again—her image remains ineffaceable—you arrive at the conclusion that you are necessary to one another's existence. Now, country air, fresh vegetables, my society, and nowhere to go in the evening, do not seem to be what you want for your complaint. Have I hit it?"

"Exactly, my uncle."

"I therefore proceed to prescribe a new remedy. I have discovered the very thing that you want, until everybody comes into town again, and you can resume your search for *P'Incognita*. You need a sensation, and I've got it for you."

"Let me hear what it is."

Upon this I pulled out of my pocket that little packet of incense, the letter of Lillie Taylor, and handed it to my nephew to read. With an amused look of puzzle he finished it, and I continued :

"Of course it isn't possible for *me* to meet those overtures appropriately. I am a married man—settled in life—everything steady and quiet of that sort. I am romantic, and write about moonlight ; but being rheumatic, do not walk in it. In fact, I have given up all kinds of sky-larking.

"But, supposing I had a nephew—a tolerably well-looking young rascal—with a great fund of woman-talk and a boundless talent for every variety of diablerie. Supposing he bore the same name as his uncle, had some approach to the same intellectual forehead, and by circumstances which we will not here dwell upon, had contracted the same look of classic sadness. And, to wind up, supposing he took it into his head to make believe he was his own uncle—to borrow the lyre of that gifted man and play the poet for a few days to a charming female adorer—Heh? what do you think of the hypothesis?"

"By Jehoshaphat! wouldn't that be rich! I declare I have the greatest mind in the world—"

"Say you will!"

"Well, I *will*, then. Here's my hand on it. when is she coming?"

"Didn't you read? Five o'clock train, day after to-morrow. Your aunt and I will go down with you to see her come in. Play your game well, and if we don't have some fun, I'm mistaken."

The young man went away with a lighter step, and, putting up my hoe, I returned to let Mrs. B. into the plan. She was enough of a wag to assent to it heartily, and promised to get the best room ready for our romantic visitor.

III.

Melibœus was certainly a lad of genius. He went to work rehearsing for our little comedy with a zeal and a facility worthy of any old stager on the New York boards. He had never, even in his most unhappy moments, written so much as a sonnet; so, to prepare for being a poet, he "crammed" on the large edition of my works, until he could repeat the finest passages without a single balk. He accustomed himself to part his hair in the middle, adopted rolling collars, and affected being distrait when his teacup was passed. Oh! he did it admirably?

And by the time that we had to start for the station. on Monday afternoon, I was one universal chuckle at the prospect of his success.

According to my promise, Mrs. Barcarole and I accompanied him to the cars. Leaving the horses around the corner with black Jimmy, we planted ourselves on the platform and waited for the whistle.

We were not allowed the pleasure of long anticipation. Up came the train, stopped, and began to disgorge its motley contents of men, women, babies, handboxes, and parcels, which were to stop at Middletown Centre. In vain did I search the crowd for my idea of my admirer. There were spectacles there, but they beamed with no look of inquiry for a poet ; ancient maiden ladies, with a pensiveness in their tones ; but it was entirely laid out upon questions, as to the welfare of their trunks—they asked no one the way to Mr. Barcarole's.

I was just turning to my wife and Melibæus, with the words, "What if it should be a sell !" when a fresh, childish voice asked, close at my back, "Can you tell me how to get to the house of the poet Barcarole ?"

"Whist " said I, in a hurry, "Now's your time !" and touched Melibæus with my elbow.

"I am Mr. Barcarole, Madam," said that young gentleman courageously, turning to the petite veiled figure whence the inquiry proceeded. "May I dare to hope that this is my fair correspondent?"

The young woman lifted her veil with a tiny hand that trembled with surprise; and lo! no Gorgon, no Sphinx was there, but a very, very pretty girl of eighteen or thereabout, blushing and downcast in a state of the most winsome trepidation.

But what is the matter with Melibœus Jun.? What is there in that little modest sylphide to startle a young man in society, to make him swerve as from the cannon's mouth?

The youth caught my arm convulsively and just whispered brokenly in my ear, "It is *she*—it is *she*—the lady I saw at the Philharmonics!"

For a moment my astonishment was mixed with the fear that this sudden discovery would unnerve the boy from the execution of his plan—that he would let this magnificent chance slip through his fingers. But no! he did better than my utmost hope. Seeming in an instant to recognize the unsurpassed advantage of making love on a poetical basis, he regained all his self-possession and took Lillie Taylor by the hand.

"Let me lead you to my carriage, fair maiden—'tis but the rude wain of a simple bard—yet it is ennobled by waiting for *you*."

The two led the way, Mrs. Barcarole and myself following close behind. And as we walked, we looked at one another queerly without speaking. At last I broke the silence.

"She is '*very ugly*,' heh, Mrs. Barcarole?"

"'Tall maiden lady, torn from robust male support,' heh, *Mr.* Barcarole?"

We both of us certainly had to confess our ideals of the young lady somewhat at fault. She was a girl, and I have said, of eighteen, with great dreamy brown eyes that melted in their own softness—a sweet little sympathetic face that daguerreotyped your own thought when you talked earnestly to her—and to such a woman one felt ashamed to talk in any other way. And her airy figure was just such a one as you would not be in the least surprised to come upon in the wood-solitudes, lying on the tops of the lilies and violets without bending them, drinking dew and listening to fairy stories from the bees.

Melibœus handed the young girl into our carryall, jumped in beside her on the front seat, and

when his aunt and I had mounted in behind, actually turned around toward us with the most unblushing coolness, and said, blandly,

“ Miss Taylor, permit me to make you acquainted with an uncle and aunt of mine, who had the misfortune to be born deaf and dumb. They were for a long time in the school of Mr. Weld, at Hartford, where they first knew each other. I am happy to say, however, that they have so far overcome that sad calamity that they understand your meaning by watching the motion of your lips. Though they are still unable to—”

The miserable sinner ! I knew what he was going to say. “ Speak ! ” that was the word ; and Mrs. Barcarole and I stared at one another frantically, knowing that a fearful embargo was hanging over our tongues for Heaven knew how long. Thought of agony ! I grasped the young villain by the arm, signing to him to wait, and wrote on the back of a letter with my pencil.

“ For Heaven’s sake say we talk incoherently, at least ! ”

That wretch looked at us with a sweet smile, and scribbled under my sentence,

“ Suppose she’d been old and ugly—who’d have

had to stand it *then*? I *guess* you can put up with paying for *that* risk?"

Mrs. Barcarole and I sat, in all senses, literally dumb. Melibœus whipped up the horses, finished his sentence with, "Utterly unable to articulate," and the young girl shook hands with us over the back of the seat, her face full of childish pity.

"Poor, poor, people!" she said, sadly, to the wicked humbug. "Yet they looked so kind, so intelligent indeed. The lady is quite good-looking, and the gentleman has a very healthy, animated countenance, though I should never have taken him for a poet's relative."

"Why, sweet little maiden?"

Lillie blushed, but answered, "I oughtn't to say it when the poor man is your uncle; but his look seems unappreciative—matter-of-fact. Did he ever read any of your beautiful poetry?"

"I'll ask him. Uncle, did you ever read any of *my* beautiful poetry?"

I was enraged enough at the young man already and this last was said with such a provoking ostentation of distinctness to conform to the assumed necessities of my case, that I became conscious of being very red in the face, and made an insulting ges-

ture of abhorrence, pointing to the mud under the carriage-wheels.

"He says, Miss Taylor, that he never did, and thinks it vile stuff."

"Oh, the monster! I'm sure it's very kind of you to let him stay with you."

"He feels it to be so; don't you, uncle?"

The conversation happily now took a turn.

"Do you know Mr. Barcarole," said the young girl to my nephew, "that in some respects you are—I hardly know what to call it—perhaps 'surprise' is the word—somewhat of a surprise to me?"

"A disagreeable one, is it!"

"No—oh no! not that. But as I was riding in the cars to-day I began thinking what a strange thing I was doing. You must never tell; but my guardian thinks I have gone into the country to spend the summer with an old aunt. I don't like guardians; but then, you know, one has to have such a thing—a young lady especially, just out of Madame Gaie-Cherie's, and all finished up, with what they call large expectations, I believe, and no near relations in this country. Well, as I said, I was thinking, and I began to wonder what everybody would say, if they knew I had run away. Then,

said I, supposing the poet Barcarole should be like other people after all—even such a person as that poor fellow on the back seat, for instance—and should have some terrible wife who would think me impudent and all that sort of thing, for coming to see how a poet looked, without being invited. And supposing he should be very stern and cold, and she should be unkind, and not even ask me to take off my things and sit down, and all of them should say I was crazy perhaps. I hadn't looked at the matter in this light at all before, and when I did I was one tremble all over. I came near not asking where you lived at all, but half made-up my mind to stay at the station till the next train down, and go right back. And now it is so delightful to find that you are not angry with me, but, in everything, just like your poetry—just as I thought you'd be, except—

“Except what, Miss Taylor?”

The little creature looked down, with half-shut eyes, and grew all damask rosy as she whispered—

“Younger and better looking. You aren't at all like your portrait.”

Pleasant for the deaf-and-dumb man on the back seat! Oh! decidedly. Mrs. Barcarole and I looked at one another with indignation that could hard-

ly be kept speechless. The picture referred to was taken some twenty years ago, just after I was married. Exactly as I looked, when the beloved woman struck her colors to my fascination. Peale did it, and considered it a privilege. It had been the work of months. There were six fresh blush roses in my button-hole at each sitting. And every curl was conscientiously educated into symmetry with the best adipose secretion of Canada bears. Yet Melibœus Barcarole—having lived to an age when there was no opportunity of going back and getting it done better—hears a graceless scamp, who plasters his short hair on his temples, and wears whiskers, shaped like a breakfast-roll, inclined toward his shoulders, called “younger, better looking” than that exquisite *chef-d’œuvre*.

Oh, times and manners, you are going to the devil!

Necessarily both Mrs. Barcarole and I were in the sweetest of humors when our carryall reached the piazza of Eclogue Cottage. To the manifest wonder of my little rhyme-struck devotee, or more properly, now, my nephew’s, she found that rural solitude not altogether one of nature’s wilds, but a country residence, with its parallel in common life

—gravel walks, box around the front flower beds, a shorn lawn, and glimpses in the rear of something very like the vegetable garden and picket fence of an unnatural state of society. She was dispatched, immediately on arriving, into a very civilized and pretty little bedroom, and, while she attended to the details of her after-travel toilet, Mrs. Barcarole and myself embraced the opportunity, in the other end of the house, to unburden ourselves of our opinion of Mr. M. Barcarole, Jun., in a very un-deaf-and-dumb manner, and to that young gentleman personally.

“Well, Sir! I suppose you consider what you’ve been doing a very delicate and graceful joke?”

“I confess it wears a little of that aspect, my dear aunt.”

“To set your uncle and me in such a ridiculous light before a total stranger!—a young woman in New York society too, who probably knows the Summergoods, and the Fallstocks, and all the first families of our circle (I’ve often heard them speak of a very rich Miss Taylor), and who will go back and let it all out, and then we’ll be in a pretty fix, won’t we? I sha’n’t dare to lift up my head next winter!”

"My precious aunt, I intend this whole affair to be an entire secret between me—and my wife."

"What are you talking about?"

"Simply that the young lady who is now arranging the hair of Miss Lillie Taylor will return to New York Mrs. Melibœus Barcarole, Jun. I know that it seems hard to deprive you of the noble gift of speech. I myself shall suffer more severely than you can imagine by the deprivation of your kindly tones and my uncle's inspired utterances; but recollect what you gain to balance the loss. You may both be present at the best scenes of all our piquant courtship—you can assist me, oh, indescribably, if you will! and then think, my beloved lyric kinsman, what an opportunity *you* will have for the gradual development of a drama, upon the basis of this joke, which will eclipse all your past fame on both continents. Just fancy it! Already, how the titles for the surpassing work crowd on me! 'The Delicious Deception, a Dithyrambic of the Deaf-and-Dumb!' Or, 'Love Lassoed by a Lute-String!' Or, 'Pseudo-Melibœus, and his Marriage with a Muse-Mad Maiden!!!'"

"Melibœus, you hair-brained rogue!—"

"Put it in any shape you please. Drama—five

acts. Romance—ten cantos—Maud style—I., II., III., IV., in big Roman numerals. Oh, delicious ! And *won't* it take ? Dear me ! ”

“ Wife, I don't know but the young scamp's right ! Shall we forgive him ? ”

“ Oh, it's all very well for you, Mr. Barcarole, you get paid for keeping your mouth shut *now*, by being able to sing poems with it by-and-by ; but I'm only a poor little woman, and no poet—my mouth goes unrewarded—unused utterly—”

Both the Melibœi jumped up at once and falsified the statement by occupying opposite sides of that pretty little wronged aperture with a sonorous, long kiss.

“ Forgive me, deary, deary aunt ! Be good and help me ! Oh, *do* help me ! I have been joking ; but I tell you seriously now, that all my happiness for the rest of my days depends on this thing's turning out well—and I know you will be as good to me as you always have been—*do*, dear Aunt Barcarole ! ”

So it ended with our both being merciful to the rogue.

IV.

Things went on delightfully. Mrs. Barcarole and I lived day after day, in a delicious atmosphere of courtship, all fragrant and full of sunny sparkles as the one wherein we first kissed and cooed twenty years ago. Seeing those young people together, hearing their long, sweet, silly talks, watching their innocent dalliance, knowing that every hour they grew deeper, and still deeper enamored—all this lifted us quite out again from the sober, settled marriage twilight into which we, like even the warmest of lovers, had passed with the course of years.

And Lillie Taylor was so beautiful, so original, so good—an emigrant from Arcadia, just “come over”—a citizen of the unfallen virgin world. In her life there was none of that stiltedness which had appeared in her letter, or, if there was the same pure enthusiasm and rhapsody, now that we knew her, it did not seem stilted. She was a most impassioned creature—but her fire burned without smoke or soot—there was no taint of bad self-consciousness in her emotion. She never was ashamed of herself, as most impulsive people happen to be fifty

times a day—there was nothing to be ashamed of. Yet I blessed Heaven, over and over again, that it had cast her, fresh-risen, like the yet pure Venus, above the waters of this world, upon our poetic shores. There were few places where she could possibly have been understood but Eclogue Cottage,—elsewhere she would have been the horror of appropriate beings, or, if tolerated at all, only under the shadow of that insulting protection known as “making allowances” for one. As for us, though we had been startled at first by the pureness of a pearl which was so unusual as to challenge suspicion lest it were mock, we soon came to make the only allowance that was made for our own worldliness—not her unworldliness.

I do not suppose that she ever once gave a name to the feeling she was cherishing for Melibœus. She was perfectly satisfied ; she drank in happiness to the full, and that was all she knew, as she walked lingeringly through the woody lanes with that naughty make-believe poet’s arm folding her waist, her hand on his shoulder, and their tongues alternately, or in duet, running on to the music of his borrowed verses, quoted at all times and in all places with an admiration on her part great enough

to have flattered the rogue into an inspiration of his own.

Meanwhile the deaf-and-dumb man and his wife sat by, looking on, seeing and hearing many sweet, and a number of funny things, with an exhilaration that almost boiled over.

As yet the pastoral affection of the pair had not reached that tender spot on the stair-case of love, the landing-place of the first kiss. Mrs. Barcarole and I were favored enough to be close by when they did come to it. And the manner thereof was droll exceedingly.

The whole of one dreamy, lotus-eating afternoon, the two had been sitting together on the turf between the great roots of my favorite lawn elm, talking poetry and romance as usual, while my wife and I amused ourselves with the pretended occupations of knitting and reading, upon a rustic seat within easy ear-shot. By-and-by we heard Lillie say :

“Mr. Barcarole, there is one favor I want you to do me, that I have never asked yet. Make me an impromptu.”

My eye caught Melibœus’ just then, and a more comical look of agony I never saw in the world.

The struggle going on between Humbug, whose existence depended on asserting its indefinite capacity for all things poetic, and Truth, groaning to say, "Never did such a thing in my life!" showed on his face like a very bad fit of toothache. I gave a maliciously good-humored chuckle in spite of myself, and pretended it was something very rich in the volume of Bibb's Discourses I was reading that did it. Melibœus threw a pleading glance at me, and answered with a desperate sprightliness:

"Oh! do you like impromptus? Now really, for my part, I think they are the very shallowest pools in the stream of song. I don't recollect when I have made one."

"But just try it please, for once. I know you can improvise. I saw a notice of you in the *Lady's Magazine* as long ago as I can remember, that said you were only equalled in that way, though not surpassed, by the Italian improvisatori. Come, that's a dear man. I shall keep it forever to remember you by."

"And the little creature took out a note-book of visiting-card dimensions, and a pencil like a button-needle, to be ready.

For a moment Melibœus caught his breath, and

then, with the sudden determination of getting as much as possible for the terrific risk to his laurels, he said.

"Yes, I do it on one condition. You grant me a favor in return, and pay it beforehand. Sooner or later I must have taken it without asking, for I'm wanting it more and more every minute. Give me one of your very sweetest kisses, Lillie Taylor!"

The young girl hesitated for a moment and blushed, glanced askance at Mrs. Barcarole and me, saw us very busy, and remembered we were deaf and dumb, then made up one of the most witching little mouths, and looked "Well, if you must" at Melibœus.

The young man did not expect this promptness, evidently. He had flirted in town, among the window-curtains at parties, out of town, on watering-place piazzas, but I doubt exceedingly if he ever asked for a kiss in so matter-of-fact and direct a style before, and had it granted so pure-heartedly and quickly.

But he adapted himself to this new phase of woman's character very creditably. And when his lips settled, with all the chivalric gentleness of a humming-bird dipping into a fuschia, upon those of

Lillie Taylor, I wondered, peeping over my spectacles, whether he was thinking of the impromptu. He assured me afterward that that consideration for the moment was entirely banished from his mind. If so, and it be true that the verse he made was as entirely without immediate forethought as mine would have been likely to be at that age, just after the absorption of my first kiss from the girl I loved, then I must say I consider the effort a clear case of Cupid's own inspiration, for I never imagined before that that boy could realize the coincidence in termination of "frog" and "log."

"And now for the impromptu," said Lillie Taylor. "It ought to be a very good one, naughty poet, for you have broken the bouquet in my belt all to pieces."

With a desperate enthusiasm Melibœus began :

"Sweet girl, those damaged roses speak
More—hold on a minute—oh, yes—than my lips could in a
week;
My heart just touched them, they were—were—well, say—
shattered;
It must be contagious—to be—battered."

Lillie Taylor clapped her hands.

"Is that the way they improvise!" said she.

"It's very funny. I like it, though. Is that one of your best?"

"Better than anything I ever said. Better than anything in my published poems." And Melibœus looked over at me with a triumphant relief which silenced sarcasm. I did not chuckle; but Mrs. Barcarole did, very quietly, in a gentle, approving way, as women do when they see a thing of that sort going all right. Lillie Taylor put down the impromptu on her note-book. So did Melibœus on his. And he has written for the journals ever since—a striking instance of the revelation of slumbering powers which may be effected by a pretty woman, who moreover is good and loving.

It was proposed that same afternoon, when the sun had reached a comfortable nearness to his bedtime, that we should ride to the village of Middletown Centre behind the bays. That idea seemed acceptable, and after a very pleasant hour, we all stood on the platform of the station enjoying, what to us simple country folk was a pleasant exhilaration, seeing the evening train come in. Among the passengers there stepped from the cars a small boy, with a bundle of placards under his arm, and a very mutsy paste-pot hanging from his hand. Lillie

and Melibœus were now separated by the crowd from my wife and me, and did not notice him. We did, and saw him plaster up in a very conspicuous position on the outer wall of the station-house one of the bills from his package.

"Perhaps it is a circus coming," said Mrs. Barcarole. "The children will like to see the monkeys. They come back from school next week, you know."

No. It was no circus—monkeys were not even indirectly mentioned—and with faces of mingled perplexity and horror we read and saw it was—something else.

I left my wife standing by the bill for a moment, and sought out my nephew. Signing my excuse to Lillie, I drew him aside, and whispered to him to go to his aunt; then took the young lady under my protection, while he hurried off to the spot.

When he reached there he read as follows, with what emotions I leave to be imagined:

"\$500 REWARD.

"The above sum will be paid to any one who will give information leading to the discovery of Miss Lillie Taylor, a young lady who left the house of her guardian, the subscriber on the 5th ult, and has not since been seen or heard from."

Here followed her description. Then the placard continued :

"At the time of her departure her intention was the paying a visit to her aunt, Mrs. Tabitha Sears of Chelmsford; but as that lady has not the slightest knowledge of her whereabouts, it is feared she has been forcibly abducted, or that other foul play has been instrumental in her disappearance. Persons able to give the slightest clew to her present situation will receive the reward above stated, and the sincere thanks of her very anxious relatives.

COTTIN BAYLES,

No — Broad St "

"Now what have you got to say?" asked Mrs. Barcarole.

The only opinion Melibæus vouchsafed was, that it was a very pretty kettle of fish. To which his aunt acceded cordially.

"And what are you going to do about it?"

"Discover her whereabouts to her guardian, and claim the \$500. That amount I shall invest, one half in a saddle horse for my uncle, the other in furs for you, to pay you for being such good dummies."

"So you will back out after all?"

"Wait till to-morrow morning, and see if I do."

The whistle was just blowing for the departure of the train when Melibæus tapped the placard boy on the shoulder.

"You needn't go any farther up the road. Take the next train back to town, and tell Mr. Bayles to meet me—no matter what my name is—at this station to-morrow at twelve o'clock. I will give him the information he wants."

The boy stared for a minute, not knowing whether he was being victimized. But Melibœus quietly drew the placards from under his arm, thus leaving him no option, paid him for them at the rate of a cent apiece, and said, "Mind me," in a voice which reassured him. He then scratched down the still wet bill from the wall, and returned with his aunt to me.

That night we were all sitting after tea in the library by one of the windows which opened upon the veranda. Melibœus and Lillie had taken their places upon the sill—it was their favorite seat, for it had no back, and that gave the young man a pretext for supporting the waist of the little girl with his arm. She was now leaning with her elbow on his knee, and looking up rapturously into his face as he recited one of my poems :

"To be great, yet not for glory—
To be famed, yet not for pride—
Sung in songs, rehearsed in story,
Lifted up, yea, deified—

Only to feel that you
Were given your queenly due
In being honored by my side."

Finishing the poem, his voice grew yet more earnest.

"Lillie Taylor, when you came to Eclogue Cottage, or rather when you started for it, what was your feeling for that person known as Melibœus Barcarole—the exact nature and extent of it, I mean, if you can define it?"

She thought for a few seconds, and then answered considerably:

"It was intense admiration—reverence for your great mind."

"You are sure you would have come just as soon if you had known me to be the father of a family—an old man already married?"

I could see that Lillie Taylor caught the hint contained in these words, for even in the moonlight her face suddenly flushed scarlet, and with a manner of wounded pride, or as if she would withdraw misplaced confidence, she removed her elbow from the young man's knee and said, spiritedly:

"I came to enjoy seeing and hearing the *poet*—I do not have to leave New York to *find a man*."

"Do not be offended. I meant nothing unpleasant. You will understand why I ask the question in a moment. You have been here now a month. When your letter came I expected to receive you as a devotee. Lillie Taylor!—every day you have been here has made me yours—you have grown dearer to me than all the fame I could win if I were a Homer! And tell me—sincerely, from your deep, true woman's heart—has any such change happened in your feeling for me? Do you *love* me, dearest?"

Probably she awoke to know it for the first time. For she became pale again as the moon that was silvering them both, and trembled from head to foot as she faltered out,

"It has all been like some long, beautiful dream,—yet I know now that I do—yes, I do love you with all my heart."

I checked myself just in time not to say "Hurrah." But they would not have heard me, or anything but their own hearts, which were now throbbing close together in the strange gladness of their first love embrace. Melibœus spoke first.

"And you are sure, dearest love, perfectly sure that it is not an admiration for my talents in the least degree that makes you love me?"

"If you had never written a line—if you hated poetry—if you were as unknown and untalented as your poor uncle—I would love you just as much."

"Then I will dare to make a confession to you. Forgive me, if you can ; but what you just supposed, for the mere question's sake, is true—a fact. I am *not* the Melibœus Barcarole who is a poet—I am not famous—I am nothing but a man who loves you with his whole soul ! Lillie, can you love me yet ? "

"Why, what in the world do you mean ? "

"This, sweet one—that I have worn a mask ever since you have been here—I have made believe that I was the poet, only because I feared that without that you would never, never think of me, care for me, love me. For, absorbed in the famous uncle, how could you ever have looked even at the unheard-of nephew ? Oh ! it was very wrong to be such a cheat ; but think what a temptation beset me when I knew that I might thus be deciding a whole life's happiness."

"You amaze me ! Who is the poet ? Is there one at all ? "

"It is my uncle, Barcarole, who sits right behind us on the divan. Bless his dear soul for giving you to me ! "

"And is he really deaf and dumb?"

"Not a bit of it, nor my aunt either. Can you—can you forgive me?"

"Oh, you shameful, wicked sham! You bad man! You imitation pearl—you paste diamond! I am so angry with you I hardly know how to speak!"

"Well, Lillie! It is all as I feared—I have sinned too much to be forgiven. I am not worthy of you—the rest of my life must be spent in repentance for the folly that has lost you. I will go to-morrow."

He rose to leave her, with a face that was full of intense pain; but just then the conflicting feelings in Lillie Taylor's bosom grew too much to keep in, and woman's ready relief came, as she threw herself upon the breast of the penitent young humbug, sobbing, and saying in a choked voice, "Oh, don't—I *do* love you—I *do*!"

Mrs. Barcarole and I had borne it as long as possible. We threw ourselves into the affecting scene, and mixed up our arms and lips inextricably with those of the two lovers, kissing and hugging, crying and laughing, hurraing and soothing. And when we had all exhausted ourselves we sat down.

"It has all ended so happily now," said I, feeling called on to address the meeting, "that I am hardly

worry that we were all such rascals. Lillie Taylor, forgive me as well as Melly. Wife, I am a humbug, thou art a humbug, he is a humbug—we, ye, and they are humbugs ; but, future, indicative, and negative, we will never do it again. I am the poet you admired, Lillie. If you've

‘The slightest particle
Of that pleasant article—’

left for me, do me the favor to let me ring for the waiter, send after our minister and give you to the man that loves you. And thank your aunt, Melibœus, for having fallen in love with me and carried me off twenty years syne—or, you may be sure you'd never have been my proxy in the entertainment of this visitor !”

And the two were married that very night.

As I came up into our cozy little bedroom I saw the last review, with a flattering notice of me on the table, and then I looked at my good, smiling, happy wife. As a symbolic act, I threw the magazine on the floor, kicked it across the room, and kissed Mrs. Barcarole with a fervent enthusiasm, crying—

“ Oh, ye gods ! how much better to be loved than to be admired ! ”

V.

The next morning broke on us as clear and smiling as it ought, to honor worthily those dear young people's first married day. And all our faces were as clear—the masks gone forever—the tongues untied—and the naughtiness of the past weeks forgiven by Lillie, and forgotten in the dove-like before breakfast kisses which she gave us all.

“And now, my dear wife,” said Melibœus, in the serene and lovely dignity of being married, which fitted him *so* much better than laurels—“how would you like to go with me this morning and give somebody a delightful surprise? Your guardian, as I learned indirectly yesterday, is a little worried at your absence, and to put his mind at ease I have invited him to come up in the twelve o'clock train and hear all about you. Will you go down with me to meet him.”

Lillie looked a little confused. Then said she, “Dear deaf-and-dumb-ies, will you promise to be really dumb if I'll tell you something? You too, Melly—I never said a word about it before, for I wouldn't have it get out for the world—but now, as it's all in the family, I'll speak it. Just the day be-

fore I ran away, I got a little note from my guardian, Mr. Bayles, and it actually asked me to be his wife, just like any matter of business, and ended with promising to build a green-house if I would. I haven't any doubt it was written in the very same style that his letters about coffee, and tea, and molasses are down in Broad Street. I never answered it—it frightened me out of my wits—and then I came up here. Oh my ! won't he be angry when he sees me ! But then, the idea of my being stepmother to young Cottin Bayles, who's older than I am, and who does nothing but dress and cultivate horrid habits. Nobody'd like to be it, I'm sure. It's too ridiculous. But never mind—I'll go with you—only don't let him make you angry or say anything rude dear."

We had been so long practicing ruses that we couldn't quite yet consent to abjure them utterly, and so contrived one which was carried out as follows :

Lillie, Melibœus, Mrs. B., and myself, made up our usual *partie carré* and drove down to the station. When we heard the train coming, the two ladies and I hid in the baggage room, leaving the door just enough ajar to let us watch the operations of my nephew.

Among the very first passengers that leaped to

the ground, was the Dr. Bartolo of our dear little Rosina. Melibœus knew him instantly—who does not know Cottin Bayles, Senior, that has ever been in New York, operated on 'Change, and attended Leviathan Anniversary Meetings of Brobdignagian Societies? And, in spite of his intense anxiety, he seemed to stand existence remarkably well, and to be as beaming with intense well-to-doishness as ever. Before he could look around or make inquiries of anybody Melibœus had taken him pathetically by the immaculate olive right glove, and observed to him, in a tone of profound sympathy :

“ I am the person, Mr. Bayles, who sent to confer with you upon the painful subject of the unfortunate young lady.”

“ My dear Sir, you will oblige me by instantly relieving the deep solicitude under which I labor. For many days past I have neglected all the fluctuations of the market—sugars have risen and fallen—I pay no attention to them whatever—to speak vulgarly, my business is by the ears—I am pre-occupied, abstracted. I hope she isn't dead ! ”

“ No—she still lives.”

“ And can you tell me where I may find her ? It is of the utmost importance in her prospects that she

returns with me. In strict confidence, I will tell you that one of the wealthiest and most prominent men in New York has made overtures for her hand. I feel as if I should like to aid him. Let us come to business—what do you know of her?”

“Yes—just as you say—*business*—and that includes the \$500 reward. You may notice, in looking at me, that *I* do not suffer from the want of it; but I wish to aid a literary man not over-rich who has been prominent in acts of the greatest kindness to your ward. Give me your check then, and I produce her.”

I rushed out of my concealment.

“No no, Melibœus, that is carrying the joke a little too far. I am authorized by that literary man to say he will receive no money — being satisfied with the consciousness of a noble action.”

Mr. Bayles stared at us both —not knowing in the least what to make of it.

“Perhaps you are right, uncle,—more especially as Mr. Bayles might think his money thrown away, when he discovered how little we are able to assist his prominent wealthy friend. Aunt, Lillie darling! will you favor us with your presence?”

The two ladies emerged from their hiding-place,

and with mingled condescension, and a proper guardianly displeasure at the conduct of his ward, Mr. Bayles took Lillie by the hand saying,

"In spite of the past, I am glad to see you again, Miss Taylor."

"Thank you, Mr. Bayles, you are very kind."

"Oh dear me!" cried Melibœus. "You need'nt be so fearfully reserved, Mr. Bayles. I shall always consider you as a venerable friend of the family. You may kiss *my wife*."

"Sir, this is no joking matter!"

"I never was more cheerfully serious in my life."

"Are you *his* wife, Mistress Lillie?"

"I am so happy as to be that person."

"Then I consider you all a precious set of scamps, and bid you a correspondingly respectful good-morning. You may suffer for this yet, Sir!"

But he never has. On the contrary, he is rejoicing to this day in the results of that month at Eclogue Cottage, when his uncle's verses were the prelude to that sweet music which thus far fills his heart and Lillie's in their happy married life—when the gift of a wife, better than all laurels, crowned the loan of a Lyre!

FITZ HUGH LUDLOW.



THE WIDOW BY BREVET.



LET me introduce the courteous reader to two ladies.

Miss Picklin, a tall young lady of twenty-one, near enough to good-looking to permit of a delusion on the subject (of which, however, she had an entire monopoly), with cheeks always red in a small spot, lips not so red as the cheeks, and rather thin, sharpish nose, and waist very slender, and last (not least important) a very long neck, scalded on either side into a resemblance to a scroll of shrivelled parchment, which might or might not, be considered as a *misfortune*—serving her as a title deed to twenty thousand dollars. The scald ~~was~~ inflicted, and the fortune left in consequence, by maiden aunt, who, in the babyhood of Miss Picklin

attempted to cure the child's sore throat by an application of cabbage-leaves steeped in hot vinegar.

Miss Euphemia Picklin, commonly called Phemie—a good-natured girl, rather inclined to be fat, but gifted with several points of beauty, of which she was not all aware; very much a pet among her female friends, and admitting, with perfect sincerity and submission, her sister's exclusive right to the admiration of the gentlemen of their acquaintance.

Captain Isaiah Picklin, the father of these ladies, was a merchant of Salem, an importer of figs and opium, and once master of the brig "Simple Susan," which still plied between his warehouse and Constantinople—nails and codfish the cargo outward. I have not Miss Picklin's permission to mention the precise date of the events I am about to record, and, leaving that point alone to the imagination of the reader, I shall set down the other particulars and impediments in her course of true love, with historical fidelity.

Ever since she had been of sufficient age to turn her attention exclusively to matrimony, Miss Picklin had nourished a presentiment that her destiny was exotic; the sod of Salem was too poor, and the indigenous lovers too mean; and that, petted in her

twenty thousand dollars, she was a choice production, set aside for flowering in a foreign clime, and destined to be transplanted by a foreign lover. With this secret in her bosom, she had refused one or two gentlemen of middle age, recommended by her father, besides sundry scores of young gentlemen of slender revenues in her own set of acquaintances, till, if there had been anything beside poetry in Shakespeare's assertion that it is :—

Broom groves

Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,

the neighboring "brush-barrens" of Saugus would have sold in lots at a premium. It was possibly from the want of nightingales, to whose complaining notes the gentleman of Verona "turned his distresses," that the discarded of Salem preferred the consolations of Phemie Picklin.

News to the Picklins! Hassan Keui, the son of old Abdoul Keui, was coming out in the "Simple Susan!" A Turk—a live Turk—a young Turk, and the son of her father's rich correspondent in Turkey! "Ah me!" thought Miss Picklin.

The captain himself was rather taken aback. He had known old Abdoul for many years, had traded

and smoked with him in the *cafés* of Galata, had gone out with him on Sundays to lounge on the tombstones at Scutari, and had never thought twice about his yellow gown and red trowsers; but what the deuce would be thought of them in Salem? True, it was his son, but a Turk's clothes descend from father to son through three generations; he knew that from remembering this very boy all but smothered in a sort of saffron blanket—with sleeves like pillow-cases—his first assumption of the *toga virilis* (not that old Picklin knew Latin, but “such was his sentiment, better expressed”). Then *he* had never been asked to the house of the Stamboul merchant, nor introduced to his wives nor his daughters (indeed, he had forgotten that old Keui was near cutting his throat for asking after them)—but of course it was very different in Salem. Young Keui must be the Picklin guest, fed and lodged, and the girls would want to give him a tea-party. Would he sit on a chair, or want cushions on the floor? Would he come to dinner with his breast bare and leave his boots outside? Would he eat rice-pudding with his fingers? Would he think it indecent if the girls didn't wear linen cloths, Turkey fashion, over their mouths and noses? Would he bring his pipes?

Would he fall on his face and say his prayers four times a day wherever he should be (with a clean place handy)? What would the neighbors say? The captain worked himself into a violent perspiration with merely thinking of all this.

The Salemites have a famous museum, and know "what manner of thing is your crocodile," but a live Turk consigned to Captain Picklin! It set the town in a fever!

It would leave an indelicate opening for a conjecture as to Miss Picklin's present age, were I to state whether or not the arrival of the "Simple Susan" was reported by telegraph. She ran in with a fair wind one Sunday morning, and was immediately boarded by the harbor-master and Captain Picklin; and there, true to the prophetic boding of old Isaiah, the young turk sat cross-legged on the quarter deck, in a white turban and scarlet *etceteras*, smoking his father's identical pipe—no other, the captain would have taken his oath!

Up rose Hassan, when informed who was his visitor, and taking old Picklin's hand, put it to his forehead. The weather-stained sea-captain had bleached in the counting-house, and he had not, at first sight, remembered the old friend of his father. He passed

the pipe into Isaiah's hand, and begged him to keep it as a memento of Abdoul, for his father had died at the last Ramazan. Hassan had come out to see the world, and secure a continuance of cod-fish and goodwill from the house of Picklin ; and the merchant got astride of the tiller of his old craft, and smoked this news through his amber-mouthed legacy, while the youth went below to get ready to go ashore.

The reader, of course, would prefer to share the first impressions of the ladies as to the young Musulman's personal appearance, and I pass at once, therefore, to their disappointment, surprise, mortification and vexation ; when, as the bells were ringing for church, the front door opened, and their father entered, and in followed a young gentleman in frock coat and trowsers ! Yes, and in his hand a hat—a black hat—and on his feet no yellow boots, but calf-skin, mundane and common calf-skin and with no shaved head, and no twisted shawl around his waist ; nothing to be seen but a very handsome young man indeed, with teeth like a fresh slice of cocoa-nut meat, and a very deliberate pronounciation to his bad English.

Miss Picklin's disappointment had to be slept on, for she had made great outlay of imagination

upon the pomp and circumstance of wedding a white Othello in the eyes of wondering Salem; but Phemie's surprise took but five minutes to grow into a positive pleasure; and never suspecting, at any time, that she was visible to the naked eye during the eclipsing presence of her sister. She sat with a very admiring smile upon her lips, and her soft eyes fixed earnestly upon the stranger, till she had made out a full inventory of his features, proportions, manners, and other stuff available in dream-land. What might be Hassan's impressions of the young ladies, could not be gathered from his manner; for, in the first place, there was that reserve which belonged to him as a Turk, and, in the second place, there was a violation of all Oriental notions of modesty in their exposing their chins to the masculine observation; and though he could endure the exposure, it was, of course, with that diffidence of gaze which accompanies the consciousness of improper objects—adding to his demeanor another shade of timidity.

Miss Picklin's shoulders were not invaded quite to the limit of *terra cognita* by the cabbage-leaves which had exercised such an influence on her destiny; and as the scalds somewhat resembled two

maps of South America (with Patagonia under each ear), she usually, in full dress, gave a clear view of the surrounding ocean—wisely thinking it better to have the geography of her disfigurement well understood, than, by covering a small extremity (as it were the isthmus of Darien), to leave an undiscovered North America to the imagination. She appeared accordingly at dinner in a costume not likely to diminish the modest embarrassment of Mr. Keu (as she chose to call him)—extremely *decolleté*, in a pink silk dress with short sleeves, and in a turban with a gold fringe—the latter, of course, out of compliment to his country. “Money is power,” even in family circles, and it was only Miss Picklin who exercised the privilege of full dress at a midday dinner. Phemie came to table dressed as at breakfast, and, if she felt at all envious of her sister’s pink gown, and elbows to match, it did not at all appear in her pleasant face or sisterly attention. The Captain would allow anything, and do almost anything for his rich daughter; but as to dining with his coat on, in hot weather, company or no company, he would rather—

“be set quick i’ the earth,
And bowled to death with turnips”——

though that is not the way he expressed it. The *parti carré* therefore (for there was no *Mrs.* Picklin), was in the matter of costume, rather incongruous, but as the Turk took it for granted that it was all according to the custom of the country, the carving was achieved by the shirt-sleeved captain, and the pudding helped by his bare-armed daughter with no particular commotion in the elements. Earthquakes do not invariably follow violation of etiquette, particularly where nobody is offended.

After the first day, things took their natural course, as near as they were able. Hassan was not very quick at conversation, always taking at least five minutes to put together for delivery a sentence of English, but his laugh did not hang fire, nor did his nods and smiles ; and where ladies are voluble (as even ladies sometimes are) this paucity of ammunition on the gentleman's part is no prelude to discomfiture. Then Phemie had a very fair smattering of Italian, and, that being the business language of the Levant, Hassan took refuge in it whenever brought to a standstill in English—a refuge, by the way, of which he seemed inclined to avail himself oftener than was consistent with Miss Picklin's exclusive property in his attention. Rebellious though Hassan might

secretly have been at this authority over himself, Phemie was no accomplice ; natural modesty combining with the long habit of subserviency to make her even anticipate the exactions of the heiress ; and so Miss Picklin had "Mr. Keui" principally to herself, promenading him through the streets of Salem, and bestowing her sweetness on him from his morning entrance to his evening exit ; Phemie relieving guard very cheerfully, while her sister dressed for dinner. It was possibly from being permitted to converse in Italian during this half-hour, that Hassan made it the only part of the day in which he talked of himself and of his house on the Bosphorus, but that will not account for Phemie's sighing while she listened, never having sighed before in her life, not even while the same voice was talking English to her sister.

Without going into a description of the Picklin tea-party, at which Hassan was induced to figure in his Oriental costume, while Miss Picklin sat by him on a cushion, turbaned, and (probably) cross-legged, *a la Sultana* ; and without recording other signs satisfactory to the Salemites, that the young Turk had fallen to the scalded heiress, I must come plump to the fact on the Monday following (one week after

his arrival), Hassan left Salem, unaccompanied by Miss Picklin. As he had asked for no private interview in the best parlor, and had made his final business arrangements with the captain, so that he could take passage from New York without returning, some people were inclined to fancy that Miss Picklin's demonstrations with regard to him had been a little premature. And "some people" chose to smile. But it was reserved for Miss Picklin to look round in church, in about one year from this event, and have her triumph over "some people;" for she was about to sail for Constantinople—"sent for" as the captain rudely expressed it. But I must explain.

The "Simple Susan" came in heavily freighted with a consignment from the house of Keui to Picklin & Co.; and a letter from the American consul at Constantinople wrapped in the invoice. With the careful and ornate wording of an official epistle, it stated that Effendi Hassan Keui had called on the consul, and partly from the mistrust of his ability to express himself in English on so delicate a subject, but more particularly for the sake of approaching the object of his affections with proper deference and ceremony, he had requested that offi-

cer to prepare a document conveying a proposal of marriage to the daughter of Captain Picklin. The incomplete state of his mercantile arrangements, while at Salem the previous year, would account for his silence on the subject at that time ; but he trusted that his preference had been sufficiently manifest to the lady of his heart, and as his prosperity in business depended on his remaining at Constantinople, enriching himself only for her sake, he was sure that the singular request appended to his offer would be taken as a mark of his prudence rather than as a presumption. The cabin of the "Simple Susan," as Captain Picklin knew, was engaged on her next passage to Constantinople by a party of missionaries, male and female, and the request was to the intent that, in case of an acceptance of his offer, the fair daughter of the owner would come out, under their sufficient protection, to be wedded, if she should so please, on the day of her arrival in the "Golden Horn."

As Miss Picklin had preserved a mysterious silence on the subject of "Mr. Keui's" attentions since his departure, and as a lady with twenty thousand dollars in her own right is, of course, quite independent of parental control, the captain, after

running his eye hastily through the document, called to the boy who was weighing out a quintal of cod-fish, and bid him wrap the letter in a brown paper, and run with it to Miss Picklin—taking it for granted that she knew more about the matter than he did, and would explain it all, when he came home to dinner.

In thinking the matter over, on his way home, it occurred to old Picklin that it was worded as if he had but *one* daughter. At any rate, he was quite sure that neither of his daughters was particularly specified, either by name or age. No doubt it was all right, however. The girls understood it.

“So it’s *you*, Miss,” said he, as Miss Picklin looked round from the turban she was trying on before the glass.

“Certainly, pa ! who else should it be ? ”

And there ended the Captain’s doubts, for he never again got sight of the letter, and the turmoil of preparation for Miss Picklin’s voyage made the house anything but a place for getting answers to impertinent questions. Phemie, whom the news had made silent and thoughtful, let drop a hint or two that she would like to see the letter ; but a mysterious air, and “La, child, *you* wouldn’t understand it,”

was check enough for her timid curiosity, and she plied her needle upon her sister's wedding dress with patient submission.

The preparations for the voyage went on swimmingly. The missionaries were written to, and willingly consented to chaperone Miss Picklin over the seas provided her union with a Pagan was to be sanctified with a Christian ceremonial. Miss Picklin replied with virtuous promptitude that the cake for the wedding was already soldered up in a tin case, and that she was to be married immediately on her arrival, under an awning on the brig's deck, and she hoped that four of the missionaries' wives would oblige her by standing up as her bridesmaids. Many square feet of cod-fish were unladen from the "Simple Susan" to make room for boxes and bags, and one large case was finally shipped, the contents of which had been shopped for by ladies with families—no book of Oriental travels making any allusion to the sale of such articles in Constantinople, though, in the natural course of things, they must be wanted as much in Turkey as in Salem.

The brig was finally cleared, and lay off in the stream, and on the evening before the embarkation the missionaries arrived and were invited to a tea

party at the Picklins ! Miss Picklin had got up a little surprise for her friends with which to close the party—a “walking *tableau*—” as she termed it, in which she should suddenly make her apparition at one door, pass through the room, and go out at the other, dressed as a Sultana with a muslin kirtle and satin trowsers. She disappeared accordingly about half an hour before the breaking up ; and, conversation rather languishing in her absence, the eldest of the missionaries rose to conclude the evening with a prayer, in the midst of which Miss Picklin passed through the room unperceived—the faces of the company being turned to the wall.

The next morning at daylight the “Simple Susan” put to sea with a fair wind, and at the usual hour for opening the store of Picklin & Co., she had dropped below the horizon. Phemie sat upon the end of the wharf and watched her till she was out of sight, and the captain walked up and down between two puncheons of rum which stood at the distance of a quarter-deck’s length from each other, and both father and daughter were silent. The captain had a confused thought or two besides the grief of parting, and Phemie had feelings quite as confused, and which were not all made up of sorrow at the loss of

her sister. Perhaps the reader will be at the trouble of spelling out their riddles, while I try to let him down softly to the catastrophe of my story.

Without confessing any ailment whatever, the plump Phemie paled and thinned from the day of her sister's departure. Her spirits, too, seemed to keep her flesh and color company, and at the end of a month the captain was told by one of the good dames of Salem, that he had better ask a physician what ailed her. The doctor could make nothing out of it, except that she might be fretting for the loss of her sister, and he recommended a change of scene and climate. That day Captain Brown, an old mate of Isaiah's, dropped in to eat a family dinner and say good-by, as he was about sailing in the new schooner *Nancy*, for the Black Sea, his wife for his only passenger. Of course he would be obliged to drop anchor at Constantinople to wait for a fair wind up the Bosphorus, and part of his errand was to offer to take letters and nick-knackeries for Mrs. Keui. Old Picklin put the two things together, and over their glass of wine he proposed to Brown to take Phemie with Mrs. Brown to Constantinople, leave them both there on a visit to Mrs. Keui, till the return of the *Nancy* from the Black Sea, and

then re-embark them for Salem. Phemie came into the room just as they were touching glasses on the agreement, and when the trip was proposed to her she first colored violently, then grew pale and burst into tears, but consented to go. And, with such preparations as she could make that evening, she was quite ready at the appointed hour, and was off with the land-breeze the next morning, taking leave of nobody but her father. And this time the old man wiped his eyes very often before the departing vessel was hull down, and was heartily sorry he had let Phemie go without a great many presents and a great many more kisses.

* * * * *

A fine breezy morning at Constantinople !

Rapidly down the Bosphorus shot the caique of Hassan Keui, bearing its master from his country house at Dolma-batchi to his warehouses at Galata. Just before the sharp prow rounded away towards the Golden Horn, the merchant motioned to the caikjis to rest upon their oars, and, standing erect in the slender craft, he strained his gaze long and with anxious earnestness towards the Sea of Marmora. Not a sail was to be seen coming from the West, except a man-of-war with a crescent flag at the peak,

lying off towards Scutari from Seraglio Point, and, with a sigh that carried the cloud off his brow, Hassan gayly squatted once more to his cushions, and the caique sped merrily on. In and out, among the vessels at anchor, the airy bark threaded her way with the dexterous swiftness of a bird, when suddenly a cable rose beneath her, and lifted her half out of the water. A vessel newly arrived was hauling into a close anchorage, and they had crossed her hawser as it rose to the surface. Pitched headlong into the lap of the nearest caikji, the Turk's snowy turban fell into the water, and was carried by the eddy under the stern of the vessel rounding to, and as the caique was driven backward to regain it, the bareheaded owner sank back aghast—SIMPLE SUSAN OF SALEM staring him in the face in golden capitals.

“Oh! Mr Keui how *do* you do?” cried a well-remembered voice, as he raised himself to fend off by the rudder of the brig. And there she stood, within two feet of his lips—Miss Picklin in her bridal veil, waiting below in expectant modesty, and though surprised by his peep into the cabin windows, excusing it as a natural impatience in a bridegroom coming to his bride.

The captain of the Susan, meantime, had looked over the taffrail and recognized his old passenger, and Hassan, who would have given a cargo of opium for an hour to compose himself, mounted the ladder which was thrown out to him, and stepped from the gangway to Miss Picklin's arms! She had rushed up to receive him, dressed in her muslin kirtle and satin trowsers, though with her dramatic sense of propriety, she had intended to remain below till summoned to the bridal. The captain, of course, kept back from delicacy, but the missionaries stood in a cluster gazing on the happy meeting, and the sailors looked over their shoulders as they heaved at the windlass. As Miss Picklin afterwards remarked, "It would have been a *tableau vivant* if the deck had not been so very dirty."

Hassan wiped his eyes, for he had replaced his wet turban on his head, but what with his escape from drowning, and what with his surprise and embarrassment (for he had a difficult part to play as the reader will presently understand), he had lost all memory of his little stock of English. Miss Picklin drew him gently by the arm to the quarter-deck, where, under an awning fringed with curtains partly drawn, stood a table with a loaf of wedding

cake on it, and a bottle of wine and a Bible. She nodded to the Rev. Mr. Griffin, who took hold of a chair and turned it round, and placing it against his legs with the back towards him, looked stedfastly at the happy couple.

“Good-morning — good-night — your sister—*aspetta per amor de Dio !* and the bewildered Hassan, giving utterance to all the English he could remember, and seizing the bride by the arm.

“These ladies are my bridesmaids,” said Miss Picklin, pointing to the missionaries’ wives who stood by in their bonnets and shawls. “I dare say he expected that my sister would come as my bridesmaid,” she added, turning to Mr. Griffin to explain the outbreak as she understood it.”

Hassan bent his hand upon his forehead, walked twice up and down the quarter-deck, looked around over the Golden Horn, as if in search for an interpreter to his feelings, and finally walked up to Miss Picklin with a look of calm resignation, and addressed to her and to the Rev. Mr. Griffin a speech of three minutes in Italian. At the close of it he made a very ceremonious Salaam, and offered his hand to the bride ; and, as no one present understood a syllable of what he had intended to convey in his

address, it was received as probably a welcome to Turkey, or perhaps a formal repetition of his offer of heart and hand. At any rate, Miss Picklin took it to be high time to blush and take off her glove, and the Rev. Mr. Griffin then bent across the back of the chair, joined their hands, and went through the ceremony, ring and all. The ladies came up, one after another, and kissed the bride, and the gentlemen shook hands with Hassan, who received their good wishes with a curious look of unhappy resignation; and after cutting the cake and permitting the bride to retire for a moment to calm her feelings and put on her bonnet, the bridegroom made rather a peremptory movement of departure, and the happy couple went off in the caique towards Dolma-Catchi amid much waving of handkerchiefs from the missionaries, and hurrahs from the Salem hands of the Simple Susan.

And now, before going the reader a translation of the speech of Hassan before the wedding, we must go back to some little events which had taken place one month previously at Constantinople.

The Nancy arrived off the Seraglio Point after a very remarkable passage, having still on her quarter the north-west breeze, which had stuck to her like a

bloodhound ever since leaving the harbor of Salem. She had brought it with her to Constantinople, indeed, for twenty or thirty vessels which had been long waiting a favorable wind to encounter the adverse current of the Bosphorus, were loosing sail and getting under way, and the pilot, knowing that the destination of the *Nancy* was also to the Black Sea strongly dissuaded Captain Brown from dropping anchor in the Horn, with a chance of losing the good luck, and lying, perhaps a month, wind bound in harbor. Understanding that the captain's only object in stopping was to leave the two ladies with Keui, the opium merchant, the pilot, who knew his residence at Dolma-Catchi, made signal for a caique and kept up the Bosphorus. Arriving opposite the little village of which Hassan's house was one of the chief ornaments, the ladies were lowered into the caique and sent ashore, expecting, of course, to be received with open arms by Mrs. Keui—and then spreading all her canvas, the swift little schooner sped on her way to Trebisonde.

Hassan sat in the little pavilion of his house which looked out on the Bosphorus, eating his pil-lau, for it was the noon of a holiday, and he had not been that morning to Galata. Recognizing at once

the sweet face of Phemie as the caique came near the shore, he flew to meet her, supposing that the "Simple Susan" had arrived, and that the lady of his love had chosen to come and seek him. The reader will understand, of course, that there was no "Mrs. Keui."

And now to shorten my story.

Mrs. Brown and Phemie were in Hassan's own house, and with no other acquaintance or protector on that side of the world, and there was no possibility of escaping a true explanation. The mistake was explained, and explained to Brown's satisfaction. Phemie was the "daughter" of Captain Picklin, to whom the offer was transmitted, and as, by blessed luck, the "Nancy" had outsailed the Simple Susan, Providence seemed to have chosen to set right for once the traverse of true love. The English embassy was at Bugwulu, only six miles above, on the Bosphorus, and Hassan and his mother and sister, and Mrs. Brown and Phemie, were soon on their way thither in swift caiques, and the happy couple were wedded by the English chaplain. The arrival of the "Simple Susan" was, of course, looked for, by both Hassan and his bride, with no little dismay. She had met with contrary winds on the Atlantic, and

had been caught in the archipelago by a Levanter, and from the damage of the last she had been obliged to come to anchor off the little island of Paros and repair. This had been a job of six weeks and meantime the Nancy had given them the go-by, and reached Constantinople.

Hassan was daily on the look out for the brig in his trips to town ; and, on the morning of the arrival, his mind being put at ease for the day by his glance towards the Sea of Marmora, the stumbling so suddenly and so unprepared on the object of his dread, completely bewildered and unnerved him. Through all his confusion, however, and all the awkwardness of his situation, there ran a feeling of self-condemnation, as well as pity for Miss Picklin ; and this had driven him to the catastrophe described above. He felt that he owed her some reparation ; and as the religion in which he was educated did not forbid a plurality of wives, and there was no knowing but what she might be inclined to "do in Turkey as the Turkeys do," he felt it incumbent on himself to state the fact of his previous marriage, and then offer her the privilege of becoming Mrs. Keui No. 2, if she chose to accept. As he had no English at his command, he stated his dilemma, and

made his offer to the best language he had—Italian—and with the results the reader has been made acquainted.

Of the return passage of Miss Picklin, formerly Mrs. Keui, under the charge of Captain and Mrs. Brown, in the schooner *Nancy*, I have never learned the particulars. She arrived at Salem in very good health, however, and has since been distinguished principally for her sympathy for widows—based on what, I cannot very positively say. She resides at present with her father, Captain Picklin, who is still the consignee of the house of Keui, having made one voyage out to see the children of his daughter Phe-mie and strengthen the mercantile connection. His old age is creeping on him, undistinguished by anything except the little monomania of reading the letters from his son-in-law at least a hundred times, and then wafering them up over the fire-place of his counting-room—in doubt, apparently, whether he rightly understands the contents.

NATHANIEL P. WILLIS.

A FRIEND OF GIOBERTI'S.



HERE I am at the "Trombetta" in Turin, as dirty a hotel, be it said passingly, as you'll find out of Ireland, and seventeen long years it is since I saw it first. Italy has changed a good deal in the meanwhile, changed rulers, landmarks, systems and ideas ; not so my old acquaintance, the Trombetta ! There is the dirty waiter flourishing his dirty napkin ; and there is the long low-ceilinged table-d'hôte room, stuffy and smoky, and suffocating as ever, and there are the little grinning coteries of threes and fours round small tables, soaking their rolls in chocolate, and puffing their "Cavours," with faces as innocent of soap as they were before the war of the liberation. After all, perhaps, I'd have no objection if some friend would

ery out : "Why, Con my boy, you don't look a day older than when I saw you here in '46, I think ; I protest you have not changed in the least. What *elixir vite* have you swallowed, old fellow ? Not a wrinkle nor a gray hair, and so on. And yet seventeen years taken out of the working part of a man's life, that period that corresponds with the interval between after breakfast, we'll say, and an hour before dinner, —makes a great gap in existence ; for I did very little as a boy, being not an early riser, perhaps, and now, in the evening of my days, I have got a theory that a man ought to dine early, and never work after it. Though I'm half ashamed, on so short an acquaintance with my reader, to mention a personal incident, I can scarcely avoid, indeed, I cannot avoid, relating a circumstance connected with my first visit to the "Trombetta."

I was newly married when I came abroad for a short wedding-tour. The world at that time required new-married people to lay in a small stock of continental notions, to assist their connubiality and enable them to wear the yoke with the graceful ease of foreigners ; and so Mrs. O'D. and I started with one heart, one passport, and—what's not so pleasant, one hundred pounds, to comply with this ordinance.

Of course, once over the border, once in France, it was enough, so we took up our abode in a very unpretending little hotel of Boulogne sur mer, called "La Cour de Madrid," where we boarded for the moderate sum of eleven francs fifty centimes per diem, the odd fifty being saved by my wife not taking the post prandial cup of coffee and rum.

There was not much to see at Boulogne, and we soon saw it. For a week or so Mrs. O'D. used to go out muffled like one of the sultan's five hundred wives, protesting that she'd surely be recognized; but she grew out of the delusion at last and discovered that our residence at the Cour de Madrid effectually screened us from all remark or all inquiry, as if we had taken up our abode in the Catacombs.

Now when one has got a large stock of any commodity on hand I don't care what it is, there is nothing so provoking as not to find a market. Mrs. O'D's investment was bashfulness. She was determined to be the most timid, startled, modest, and blushing creature that ever wore orange-flowers; and yet there was not a man, woman, or child in the town that cared to know whether the act for which she left England was a matrimony or a murder.

"Don't you hate ~~this~~ place, Cornelius?"—She

never called me Con in the honeymoon—"isn't it the dullest, dreariest hole you have ever been in?"

"Not with you."

"Then don't yawn when you say so. I abhor it. It's dirty, it's vulgar, it's dear."

"No, no, it ain't dear, my love, don't say dear."

"Billiards, perhaps, and filthy cigars, and that greenish bitter-annisette, I think they call it, are cheap enough, perhaps, but these are luxuries I can't share in."

Here was the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, that presaged the first connubial hurricane. A married friend—one of much experience and long suffering had told me of this, saying, "Don't fancy you'll escape, old fellow; but do the way the minis try do about Turkey—put the evil day off; diplomatisé, promise, cajole, threaten a bit, if need be, but postpone," and, strong with these precepts, I negotiated, as the phrase is, and with a dash of reckless liberality that I tremble at now as I record it, I said, "You've only to say where—nothing but where to, and I'll take you up the Rhine, down the Danube, Egypt, the cataracts"—

"I don't want to go so far," she said dryly, "Italy will do."

This was a stunner. I hoped the impossible would have stopped her, but she caught at the practicable, and foiled me.

"There is only one objection," said I, musing.

"And what may that be ; not money, I hope."

"Heaven forbid, no. It is the language. We get on here tolerably well, for the waiter speaks broken English ; but in Italy, dearest, English is unknown."

"Let us learn Italian, then, my aunt Groves said I had a remarkable talent for languages."

I groaned inwardly at this, for the same aunt Groves had vouched for a sum of seventeen hundred and odd pounds as her niece's fortune but which was so beautifully "tied up," as they call it, that neither Chancellor nor Master was ever equal to the task of untying it.

"Of course, dearest, let us learn Italian ;" and I thought how I'd crush a junior counsel some day with a smashing bit of Dante.

We started that same night, traveled on, day after day, crossed Mont Cenis in a snowstorm, and reached the Trombetta as way-worn and wretched looking a pair, as ever travelled on an errand of bliss and beatitude.

"In for a penny" is very Irish philosophy, but I can't help that, and wrote to my brother Peter to sell another hundred for me out of the "Threes," saying "dear Pauline's health required a little change to a milder climate," (it was raining when I wrote and the thermometer over the chimney-piece at 9° Reaumur, with windows that wouldn't shut, and a marble floor without carpet) "that the balmy air of Italy" (my teeth chattered as I set it down) "would soon restore her: and already she seemed to feel the change." That she did, for she was crouching over a pan of charcoal ashes, with a railroad wrapper over her shoulders.

It's no use going over what's in every one's experience on first coming South of the Alps, the daily, hourly difficulty of not believing that you have taken a wrong road and got into Siberia, and strangest of all is to see how little the natives think of it. I declare I often thought soap must be a great refrigerant, and I wish some chemist would inquire into the matter.

"Are we ever to begin this blessed language?" said Mrs. O'D. to me, after four days of close arrest; snow still falling, and the thermometer going daily down, down, lower and lower. Now I had made

inquiries the day before from the landlord, and learned that he knew of a most competent person, not exactly a regular teacher, who would insist upon our going to work in school fashion, but a man of sense, and a gentleman,—indeed, a person of rank and title, with whom the world had gone somewhat badly, and who was at that very moment suffering for his political opinions, far in advance as they were, of those of his age.

“He’s a friend of Gioberti,” whispered the landlord into my ear, while his features became animated with the most intense significance. Now, I had never so much as heard of Gioberti, but I felt it would be a deep disgrace to confess it, and so I only exclaimed with an air of half incredulity, “Indeed.”

“As true as I’m here,” replied he. “He usually drops in about noon to read the ‘Opinione,’ and if you permit, I’ll send him up to you. His name is Count Annibale Castrocaro.”

I hastened forthwith to Mrs. O’D., to apprise her of the honor that awaited us; repeated, a little *in extenso*, all that the host had said, and finishing with the stunning announcement, “and a friend of Gioberti.” Mrs. O’Dowd never flinched under the shock, and too proud to own her ignorance, she

pertly remarked : " I don't think the more of him for that."

I felt that she had beaten me, and I sat down abashed and humiliated. Meanwhile Mrs. O'D. retired to make some change of dress ; but, reappearing after a while in her smartest morning toilet and a very coquettish little cap, with cherry-colored ribands, I saw what the word Count had done at once.

Just as the clock struck twelve, the waiter flung wide the double doors of our room, and announced as pompously as though for royalty, " Il Signor Conte di Castrocaro," and there entered a tall man, slightly stooping in the shoulders, with a profusion of the very blackest hair on his neck and shoulders, his age anywhere from thirty-five to forty-eight, and his dress a shabby blue surtout buttoned to the throat and reaching below the knee. He bowed, and slid, and bowed again till he came opposite where my wife sat, and then, with rather a dramatic sort of grace, he lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. She reddened a little, but I saw she wasn't displeased with the air of homage that accompanied the ceremony, and she begged him to be seated.

I own I was rather disappointed with the Count,

his hair was so greasy and his hands so dirty, and his general get up so uncared for ; but Mrs. O'D. talked away with him very pleasantly, and he replied in his own broken English, making little grimaces and smiles and gestures, and some very tender glances do duty where his parts of speech failed him. In fact, I watched him as a sort of psychological phenomenon, and I arrived at the conclusion that this friend of Gioberti was a very clever artist.

All was speedily settled for the lesson-hour, terms and mode of instruction. It was to be entirely conversational, with a little theme-writing, no getting by heart, no irregular verbs, no declensions, no genders. I did beg hard for a little grammar, but he wouldn't hear of it. It was against his "system," and so I gave in.

We began the next day, but the Count almost ignored me altogether, directing almost all his attention to Mrs. O'D. ; and as I had already some small knowledge of the elementary part of the language, I was just as well pleased that she should come up, as it were, to my level. From this cause I often walked off before the lesson was over, and sometimes, indeed, I skulked it altogether, finding the system as well as Gioberti's friend, to be an unconscionable

bore. Mrs. O'D. on the contrary, displayed an industry I never believed her to possess, and would pass whole evenings over her exercises, which often covered several sheets of letter paper.

We had now been about five weeks in Turin, when my brother wrote to request I would come back as speedily as I could, that a case in which I held a brief was high in the cause-list, and would be tried very early in the session. I was not sorry at the recall. I detested the dreary life I was leading. I hated Turin, and its bad feeding and bad theatres, its rough wines and its rougher inhabitants.

"Did you tell the Count we are off on Saturday?" asked I of Mrs. O'D.

"Yes," said she dryly.

"I suppose that he is inconsolable," said I with a sneer.

"He's very sorry we are going if you mean that, Mr. O'Dowd ; and so am I too."

"Well, and so am not I ; and you may call me a Dutchman if you catch me here again."

"The Count hopes you will permit him to see you. He asked this morning whether he might call on you about four o'clock."

"Yes, I'll see him with sincere pleasure for

once," I cried "since it is to say good-by to him."

I was in my dressing-room, packing up for the journey, when the Count was announced and shown in. "Excuse me, Count" said I "for receiving you so informally, but I have a hasty summons to call me back to England, and no time to spare."

"I will, notwithstanding, ask you for some of that time, precious as it is," said he in French, and with a serious gaiety that I had never observed in him before.

"Well sir," said I stiffly, "I am at your orders."

It is now seventeen long years since that interview, and I am free to own that I have not even yet attained to sufficient calm and temper to relate what took place. I can but give the substance of our conversation. It is not overpleasant to dwell on, but it was to this purpose; the Count had come to inform me that without any intention or endeavor on his part, he had gained Mrs. O'Dowd's affections and won her heart! Yes, much valued reader, he made this declaration to me, sitting opposite to me at the fire, as coolly and unconcernedly as if he were apologizing for having carried off my umbrella by mistake. It is true, he was most circumstantial in

showing that all the ardor was on one side, and that he, throughout the whole adventure, conducted himself as became a Grand Galantuomo, and the friend of Gioberti, whatever that might mean.

My amazement, I might almost call it my stupefaction at the unparalleled impudence of the man, so overcame me, that I listened to him without an effort at interruption.

"I have come to you, therefore, to-day," said he, "to give up her letters."

"Her letters!" exclaimed I, "and she has written to you!"

"Twenty-three times in all," said he, calmly, as he drew a large black pocket-book from his breast, and took out a considerable roll of papers. "The earlier ones are less interesting," said he, turning them over.

"It is about here, No. 14, that they begin to develop feeling. You see she commences to call me *Caro Animale*—she meant to say *Annibale*, but poor dear! she mistook. No. 15 is stronger—*Animale mio*—the same error; and here, in No. 17, she begins "*Diletto del mio cuore, quando non ti vedo, non ti sento, il cielo stesso non mi serride piu. Il mio Tiranno*"—that was you."

I caught hold of the poker with a convulsive grasp, but, quick as thought he bounded back behind the table, and drew out a pistol, and cocked it. I saw that Gioberti's friend had his wits about him, and resumed the conversation by remarking that the documents he had shown me were not in my wife's handwriting."

"Very true," said he, "these, as you will perceive by the official stamp, are sworn copies, duly attested at the Prefettura, the originals are safe."

"And with what object," asked I, gasping, "safe for what?"

"For you, *Illustrissimo*," said he, bowing, "when you pay me two thousand francs for them."

"I'll knock your brains out first," said I, with another clutch at the poker, but the muzzle of the pistol was now directly in front of me.

"I am moderate in my demands, Signor," said he quietly; "there are men in my position would ask you twenty thousand, but I am a *Galan-tuomo*—"

"And the friend of Gioberti," added I with a sneer.

"Precisely so," said he, bowing with much grace.

I will not weary you, dear reader, with my struggles, conflicts that almost cost me a seizure on the brain—but hasten to the result. I beat down the noble Count's demand to one-half, and for a thousand francs I possessed myself of the fatal originals, written unquestionably and indisputably by my wife's hand, and then, giving the Count a final piece of advice, never to let me see more of him, I hurried off to see Mrs. O'Dowd.

She was out paying some bills, and only arrived a few minutes before dinner hour.

"I want you, madam, for a moment here," said I with something of Othello, in the last act, in my voice, and demand.

"I suppose I may take off my bonnet and shawl first, Mr. O'Dowd," said she, snappishly.

"No madam, you may probably find that you'll need them both at the end of our interview."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked she haughtily.

"This is no time for grand airs or mock dignity, madam," said I, with the tone of the avenging angel. "Do you know these? Are these in your hand? Deny it if you can!"

"Why should I deny it? of course they are mine."

"And you wrote this, and this, and this?" cried I, almost in a scream, as I shook forth one after another of the letters.

"Don't you know I did?" said she as hotly: "and nothing beyond a venial mistake in one of them."

"A what, woman? a what?"

"A mere slip of the pen, Sir. You knew very well how I used to sit up half the night at my exercises?"

"Exercises?"

"Well, themes, if you like better; the Count made me make clean copies of them, with all his corrections, and send them to him every day—here are the rough ones;" and she opened a drawer filled with a mass of papers all scrawled over and blotted. "And now, sir, once more what do you mean?"

I did not wait to answer her, but rushed down to the landlord. "Where does the Count Castrocarrò live," I asked.

"Nowhere in particular, I believe, sir, and for the present he has left Turin—started for Genoa by the diligence five minutes ago. He is a Galantuomo, sir," added he, as I stood stupefied.

"I am aware of that," said I, as I crept back to my room to finish my packing.

"Did you settle with the Count?" asked my wife at the door.

"Yes," said I, with my head buried in my trunk.

"And he was perfectly satisfied?"

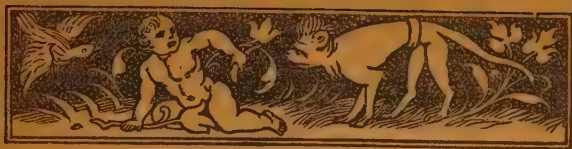
"Of course he was,—he has every reason to be so."

"I am glad of it," said she, moving away—"he had a deal of trouble with those themes of mine. No one knew what they cost him."

I could have told them what they cost *me*; but I never did till the present moment.

I need not say with what an appetite I dined on that day, nor with what abject humility I behaved to my wife, nor how I skulked down in the evening to the landlord to apologize for not being able to pay the bill before I left, an unexpected demand having left me short of cash. All these, seventeen years ago as they are, have not yet lost their bitterness, nor have I yet arrived at the time when I can think with composure of this friend of Gioberti.

CHARLES LEVER.



THE TRUTHFUL RESOLVER.

MR. JOHN UPANDOWNJOHN had the misfortune to be a strictly honest man, in which particular he stood lamentably alone. He was constructed peculiarly,—he was born into an atmosphere of integrity, and his training had added to his natural bent to a degree that made him as incapable of an untruth, or the semblance thereof, as the great George Washington himself. Having this tendency, it was well for him that he was born with a fortune, for his rigid adherence to his principles unfitted him for almost every occupation. He did try journalism, but was dismissed ignominiously for saying of a candidate of the party with which the paper acted, that he was a thief and a trickster. Then he essayed law, but he saw

enough of law before he had been in an office two weeks, while medicine lasted him scarcely a week. So he determined to do nothing, but live on his income and be an honest man.

He adopted certain rules by which he lived, and he could no more depart from them than he could rise from the earth and take a place among the stars. He ate exactly so much, at certain fixed hours and of certain kinds of food. He drank so many times a day of certain liquors which he fancied were good for him, measuring the quantity with the accuracy and precision of an apothecary; and so far did he carry rule into his life, that he put on and off his clothing on certain days in certain months, without reference to weather. I saw him shivering one bright but very cold morning in June, and demanded the reason.

"I laid off my woollens this morning," said he.

"Why lay off woollens in winter weather?" I asked.

"The 1st of June is my day therefor," said he.

"The weather *ought* to be warm to-day. I cannot break my rule."

He never neglected to pay a debt, and never told a lie, not even a white one. He was cut out of an

aunt's will, by responding to her anxious inquiry as to how she looked in a certain dress which she had set her heart on, with the simple word, "Hideous." And the same devotion to truth barred him no matter what path he took.

He was frightfully unpopular, though, notwithstanding, he held a good position among his fellows. His childlike simplicity and sterling integrity made him valuable, and besides every one knew that his devotion to truth was honest, and had nothing of bumptiousness or malice in it.

Mr. Upandownjohn was a member of the Leviathan Club. I write the word *was* sadly, for he is a Leviathan no more. The cause and manner of his leaving that delightful association of good men is the animus of this paper.

The members of the Leviathan were pleased with the appearance of Mr Upandownjohn, and made much of him. Had they known him better they probably would have loved him less, for his peculiar virtue was never popular in that Club.

He excited attention, first, by his habit of correcting loose-talking members when their statements were too highly flavored with romance ; as, for instance, when one gentleman asserted that his father

owned Flora Temple when she was a colt using her as a common hack, and selling her finally for fifty dollars, Mr. Upandownjohn quietly put him down.

"I knew your father," he said, "and a worthy, truthful man he was. He died just three years before Flora Temple was foaled. The mare he used as a hack and sold for fifty dollars must have been some other famous animal. Flora Temple will some day be the death of me. Every racing season some man narrates the circumstance of his father having once owned Flora Temple and worked her as a hack, and, what is more exasperating, he always sold her for just fifty dollars. Would that I could find one man whose father sold her for sixty dollars or sixty-two dollars and fifty cents! You, my dear sir, are the sixty-eighth man this season, whose father once owned Flora Temple. She was the most extensively owned mare I ever knew anything about."

On another occasion a gentleman detailed with great minuteness how, in doing the regular thing at Niagara by going under the sheet, the wind parted the torrent and he stepped out upon the shelf outside, when to his horror, the opening closed, leaving him outside the falling sheet on a narrow ledge of rock. With great presence of mind he darted

through the falling sheet and rejoined the frightened party who supposed him lost forever.

Mr. Upandownjohn took pencil and paper, and worked all night and the next day, without sleeping or eating. The next day he exhibited to the hero of this marvellous adventure the weight of the water in that sheet, demonstrated to him the fact that, had he got under it, he would have been mashed, though he had been constructed of cast-steel.

"Are you sure it was Niagara?" he asked anxiously. "Was n't it some other fall?"

One day a member died, and the Club did the usual thing by him. A committee of three was appointed to draft resolutions expressing the bereavement of the members, and, as ill-luck would have it, Upandownjohn was put upon the committee.

They met, and, as is always the case, two of the members really had not time to attend to it. One had an engagement at the theater; the other was to take his sister—or some one else's—to the opera.

"Upandownjohn," said the first, "you have nothing to do, and you are handy with the pen. There is no earthly necessity for keeping us here. You just write out the usual resolutions,

and send 'em down to *The Screamer*, *The Spouter*, and *The Soarer* in time for to-morrow morning."

"How shall I treat the deceased?" asked the obliging Upandownjohn.

"O, in the usual way! Speak of his qualities as a man, the feelings of the Club at his untimely taking off, the sources of consolation that we have, his qualities as an actor; hurl in something to alleviate the pangs of his family; speak of his general standing; and put in a strong dose of general comfort, you understand, to those who mourn, and so on. It'll be all right. You'll attend to it now, won't you?"

"It is a disagreeable duty," replied Upandownjohn; "but I will do it."

And they left him to his work.

Now Mr. Upandownjohn had had no experience in work of this kind, and consequently he was n't exactly clear as to the form. So he sent for the scrap-book in which such utterances of the Club had been posted from its beginning. He was shocked. There were a great many sets of resolutions on deceased members (the liquors were bad at the Leviathan), and they were all precisely alike! They ran as follows:—

Whereas, It has pleased Almighty God, the ruler of the Universe, to remove from our midst our esteemed brother and friend, John James So-and-so; and

Whereas, It is fit that we, his afflicted survivors of the Leviathan Club, should publicly express their sore grief at this great bereavement; therefore be it

Resolved, That in the death of John James So-and-so, this Club has lost a worthy member, society an ornament, his family an affectionate father and husband, the State a pillar and defender, and the world at large one it could ill spare.

Resolved, That while we mourn with sorrow that seems to have no alleviation under the great affliction that has fallen upon us, we cannot but bow in humility to this inscrutable decree.

Resolved, That we tender our heartfelt sympathy to the family and relatives of the deceased.

Resolved, That the Club-house be draped in mourning for thirty days in memory of the deceased.

As he finished, Mr. Upandownjohn brought his fist down upon the table till the glasses jingled.

"What stuff this is!" he said, indignantly. "I knew So-and-so. He was a dishonest man:—a tyrant in his family, a trader in politics, a disagreeable man in society, and curse to humanity generally. And they mourn *him*, do they? And I suppose they want me to mourn Ranter, who is to be embalmed to night. Ha! Ha! I'll astonish these people, I will write one set of honest resolutions. I knew Ranter who has just gone hence, and justice shall be done him sure. I will be as mild as I

can be and do him justice, but will be honest with his memory."

So Mr. Upandownjohn called for fresh pens and ink and paper, and wrote, and having made fair copies of what he wrote, took them himself to the office of *The Screamer*, *The Spouter*, and *The Soarer*, and went home and slept as only he can sleep who rejoices over a duty done, and well done.

The next morning the members of the Leviathan were astonished at reading in the journals the following:—

Whereas, By a long course of the most outrageous dissipation, of late nights, of late suppers of the grossest food, of perpetual beverages of the most villainous kind,—those that give the stomach no show whatever,—by unchecked and unregulated indulgence in the worst possible sensuality; in brief, by a long-continued series of the vilest outrages upon the physical, mental, and moral man, our late member, Arthur Simpson Ranter, has been taken to that bourne from which we earnestly hope he may never return; and

Whereas, When a member of the Leviathan Club expires, it is customary to commemorate him, to give him a send-off, as it were, therefore be it

Resolved, That when we remember the villanous habit he had of revoking at whist, and also his adroit way of sliding out of paying the score, whenever he lost the rubber, our grief at his departure is severely mitigated, if not entirely subdued.

Resolved, That the promptness of our late associate in accepting invitations to slake his thirst, and his intolerable tardi-

ness in reciprocating, did more honor to his head than to his heart.

Resolved, That his habitual untruthfulness, his utter disregard of his word, and his blustering and overbearing manner were the best points in him, as they served as a warning to the younger members of the Club. For this his demise is to be lamented.

Resolved, That his habit of getting boozy before eleven A. M., and staying in that condition so long as there was a good-natured man in the Club, gives us, his survivors, good reason to pause and ask no more that conundrum, "Why was death introduced into the world?"

Resolved, That when we remember the success with which our late brother borrowed money, and his utter forgetfulness of such transactions, our hearts are softened toward Adam and Eve (through whose sin death was made a part of the economy of nature), and we publicly thank that lady and gentleman for their investigatig turn of mind, and hurl back indignantly the charge that they did not do the best thing possible for posterity.

Resolved, That in the death of our late brother who was as vile as an actor as he was bad as a man, the long-suffering theatre-going public have a boon the sweetness of which cannot be overstated, and upon which we extend them hearty congratulations.

Resolved, That we congratulate Mrs. Kanter upon the fact that her private fortune was settled upon herself, and so skillfully tied up that her late husband, our deceased brother, could not get a cent of it. And we do this, remembering how often we have mourned that it was so, for the reason that, could he have touched it, he would have drank himself into an untimely tomb several years sooner than he did. Death with us buries all animosity, and does away with all acrimony.

Resolved, That the Club-house be illuminated the night of the funeral, and be draped in white for thirty days in honor of this happy event.

Resolved, That this truthful tribute to the memory of our deceased brother be published in *The Screamer*, *The Spouter*, and *The Soarer*.

To say there was an uproar in the Club the next morning, as these resolutions were read, would be to convey a very faint idea of the case. In the midst of it when it was at its height entered Upandownjohn, cleanly shaved, and as serene as a June morning.

"Did you write, and publish this miserable mess,—this ghastly concoction of infernalism?" demanded a score of indignant men.

"Did I write those resolutions, you mean. I did. I was appointed a committee to embalm the memory of the late Ranter in the daily papers. I did it. Do you find anything objectionable in them?"

"Why, you assert that he was a sponge!" exclaimed one.

"Unhappily it is the truth. I have myself paid for gallons of liquor for him."

"You say he was a bad actor?"

"The worst I ever suffered under."

"What will his wife think of what you have said of him?"

"She will recognize the portrait, and with us thank Heaven for her release."

"You give it as the sense of the Club that he was—"

"Everything that was bad, mean, and disreputable. Very good. It is true, every word of it. He owes me this day thirty-seven dollars sixty-three cents and a third which he had owed (it was borrowed) since July, 1871, at twenty seven minutes past ten o'clock in the evening. And every man of you is also his creditor. If there is a mean thing that he has not done it has escaped my notice."

By this time Mr. Upandownjohn saw that his fellow-members were angry, and for once he lost his balance and became angry too.

Brindishing his umbrella (it was not raining, but as it was the time of month when it should have rained, he carried it), he exclaimed:—

"Gentlemen, you have had one set of resolutions written which contained nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth, for my time was limited, and it was impossible to get in all that I could have said, and besides, I desired to be as lenient and mild as possible. Having written nothing but truth, you are offended. It is well. I will have nothing whatever to do with a club where the truth cannot be told. Truth, if not the immediate jewel of the soul, is very close to it.

Gentlemen, adieu. You have seen the last of John Upandownjohn. Should I stay, I might be called upon to resolve over some of your inanimate remains, and as I cannot tell a lie, it would be unpleasant."

And that afternoon the directory received his resignation and he was seen there no more.

There is no particular moral to this. There are very few men in the world of whom it would be pleasant, as the world now goes, to tell the exact truth. Therefore may all who read these lines live, as does he who writes them, so that when Azrael waves his dark pinions over them, they may lie down and die, feeling certain that the committee on resolutions, though they be as truthful as Upandownjohn, will say nothing that will call a spirit-blush to their cheeks in the hereafter.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY.



A STORY WITHOUT A TALE.

CHAPTER I

HOW WE WENT TO DINE AT JACK GINGER'S.

O it was finally agreed upon that we should dine at Jack Ginger's chambers in the Temple seated in a lofty story in Essex Court. There was, besides our host, Tom Meggot, Joe Macgillicuddy, Humpy Harlow, Bob Burke, Antony Harrison and myself. As Jack Ginger had little coin and no credit, we contributed each one share to the dinner. He himself provided room, fire, candles, tables, chairs, table cloths, napkins—no, not napkins, on second thoughts we did not bother ourselves with napkins—plates, dishes, knives, forks, spoons, (which he borrowed from the wig-makers,) tumblers, lemons, sugar, water, glasses,

decanter—by the by, I am not sure that there were decanters—salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard, bread, butter (plain and melted) cheese, radishes and cookery. Tom Meggot's was a cod's head and shoulders, and oysters to match—Joe Macgillicuddy, a boiled leg of pork, with peas pudding—Humpy Harlow, a sirloin of beef roast, with horse radish—Bob Burke, a gallon of half-and-half, and four bottles of whiskey of prime quality ("Potteen," wrote the whiskey man "I say, by Jupiter, but of which manufacture *He* alone knows")—Antony Harrison, half-a-dozen of port, he having tick to that extent at some unfortunate wine merchant's—and I supplied cigars *a discretion*, and a bottle of rum, which I borrowed of a West Indian friend of mine as I passed by. So that, on the whole, we were in no danger of suffering from any of the extremes of hunger and thirst for the course of that evening.

We met at five o'clock *sharp* and very sharp. Not a man was missing when the clock of the inner Temple struck the last stroke. Jack Ginger had done everything to admiration. Nothing could be more splendid than his turn-out. He had superintended the cooking himself of every individual dish with his own eyes—or rather eye—he having but one, the

other having been lost in a skirmish when ne was midshipman on board a privateer in the Brazilian service. "Ah!" said Jack, often and often, "these were my honest days—Gad! did I ever think when I was a pirate that I was at the end to turn rogue and study the law!"

All was accurate to the utmost degree. The table-cloth, to be sure, was not exactly white, but it had been washed last week, and the collection of the plates was miscellaneous, exhibiting several of the very choicest patterns of delf. We were not of the silver-fork school of poetry, but steel is not to be despised. If the table was somewhat rickety, the inequality in the legs was supplied by clapping a volume of Vesey under the short one. As for the chairs—but why weary about details—chairs being made to be sat upon, it is sufficient to say that they answered their purposes, and whether they had backs or not, whether they were cane-bottomed or hair-bottomed or rush-bottomed is nothing to the present inquiry.

Jack's habits of discipline made him punctual, and dinner was on the table in less than three minutes after five. Down we sat, hungry as hunters, and eager for the prey.

"Is there a parson in the company?" said Jack Ginger from the head of the table.

"No" responded I from the foot.

"Then thank God!" said Jack, and proceeded, after this pious grace, to distribute the cod's head and shoulders to the hungry multitude.

CHAPTER II.

HOW WE DINED AT JACK GINGER'S.



THE history of that cod's head and shoulders would occupy but little space to write. Its flakes, like the snowflakes on a river, were for one moment bright, then gone forever; it perished unpitied. "Bring hither," said Jack with a firm voice, "the leg of pork." It appeared, but soon to disappear again. Not a man of the company but showed his abhorrence to the Juridical practice of abstaining from the flesh of swine. Equally clear in a few moments was it that we were truly British in our devotion to beef. The sirloin was impartially destroyed on both sides, upper and under. Dire was the clatter of the knives, but deep the silence of the guests. Young Gallagher, Jack's valet-de-chambre, footman, cook, clerk, shoe-black, aide-camp, scout, confidant, dun-chaser, bum-defyer, and many other offices *in commendam*, toiled like a hero. He covered himself with glory and gravy every moment. In a short time a vociferation arose

for fluid, and the half-and-half—Whitbread quartered upon Chamytton ; beautiful heraldry ! was inhaled with the most savage satisfaction.

“ The pleasure of a glass of wine with you, Bob Burke,” said Joe Macgillicuddy, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

“ With pleasure, Joe,” replied Bob, “ what wine do you choose ? You may as well say port, for there is no other, but attention to manners always becomes a gentleman,”

“ Port then, if you please,” cried Joe ‘ as the ladies of Limerick say, when a man looks at them across the table.’”

“ Hobnobbing wastes time,” said Jack Ginger laying down the pot out of which he had been drinking for the last two minutes ; “ and, besides, it is not customary in genteel society, so pass the bottle.”

[I here pause in my narrative to state, on more accurate recollection, that we had not decanters ; we drank from the black bottle, which Jack declared was according to the fashion of the continent.]

So the port was passed round, and declared to be superb. Antony Harrison received the unanimous applause of the company ; and if he did not blush at all the fine things that were said in his

favor, it was because his countenance was of that peculiar hue that no addition of red could be visible upon it. A blush on Antony's face would be like gilding refined gold.

Whether cheese is prohibited in the higher circles of the West End I cannot tell; but I know it was not prohibited in the very highest chambers of the Temple.

"It's double Gloucester," said Jack Ginger; prime, bought at the corner—Heaven pay the cheesemonger, for I shan't, but as he's a gentleman, I'll give you his health."

"I don't think," said Joe Magillicuddy, "that I ought to demean myself by drinking the health of a cheesemonger, but I'll not stop the bottle."

And to do Joe justice, he did not.

Then we attacked the cheese, and in an incredibly short period, we battered in a breach of an angle of 45 degrees, in a manner that would have done honor to any engineer that directed the guns at San Sebastian.

With cheese came, and with cheese went celery. It is unnecessary to repeat what a number of puns were made on that most pun-provoking of plants.

"Clear the decks," said Jack Ginger to Jerry

Gallagher. "Gentlemen, I did not think of getting pastry or puddings, or dessert, or ices, or jellies or blanc-mange, or anything of the sort, for men of sense like you."

We all unanimously expressed our indignation at being supposed even for a moment guilty of any such weakness; but a general suspicion seemed to rise among us that a dram might not be rejected with the same marked scorn. Jack Ginger accordingly uncorked one of Bob Burke's bottles. Whop! went the cork, and the potteen was soon seen meandering round the table.

"For my part," said Antony Harrison, "I take this dram because I ate pork, and fear it might disagree with me."

"I take it," said Bob Burke, chiefly by reason of the fish."

"I take it," said Joe Macgillicuddy, "because the day was warm and it is very close in these chambers."

"I take it," said Tom Meggot, "because I have been very chilly all the day."

"I take it," said Humpy Harlow, "because it is such strange weather that one knows not what to do."

"I take it," said Jack Ginger, "because the rest of the company take it."

"And I take it," said I, winding up the conversation, "because I like a dram."

So we all took it for one reason or another—and there was an end of that.

"Be off, Jessy Gallagher," said Jack, "I give to you, your heirs and assigns, all that and those which remains in the pots of half-and-half—item for your own dinners what is left of the solids—and when you have pared the bones clean, you may give them to the poor. Charity covers a multitude of sins. Brush away like a shoeblack—and levant."

"Why thin, God bless your honor," said young Gallagher, "it is a small legacy he would have that would depind for his daily bread for what is left behind any of ye in the way of the drink, and this blissed hour there's not as much as would blind the left eye of a midge in one of them pots, and may it do you all good—if it ain't the blessing of heaven to see you eating. By my sowl, he that has to pick a bone after ye, won't be much troubled with the mate. Howsomever——"

"No more prate," said Jack Ginger, "here's twopence for you to buy some beer—but no," he continued, drawing his empty hand from that breeches-pocket in which he had most needlessly put it—

"no," said he, "Jerry, get it on credit wherever you can, and bid them score it to me."

"If they will," said Jerry.

"Shut the door," said Jack Ginger in a peremptory tone, and Jerry retreated.

"That Jerry," said Jack "is an uncommonly honest fellow, only he is the d——t rogue in London. But all this is wasting time, and time is life. Dinner is over, and the business of the evening is about to begin. So, bumpers, gentlemen, and get rid of this wine as fast as we can. Mr. Vice, look to your bottles."

And on this Jack Ginger gave a bumper toast.



CHAPTER III.

HOW WE CONVERSED AT JACK GINGER'S.

 HIS being done, every man pulled in his chair close to the table, and, prepared for serious action. It was plain that we all, like Nelson's sailors at Trafalgar, felt called upon to do our duty. The wine circulated with considerable rapidity, and there was no flinching on the part of any individual of the company. It was quite needless of our president to remind us of the necessity of bumpers, or the impropriety of leaving heel-taps. We were all too well trained to require the admonition, or to fall into the error. On the other hand, the chance of any man receiving more than his share in the round was infinitesimally small. The sergeant himself, celebrated as he is, could not have succeeded in getting any more than his neighbors. Just to our friends, we were also just to ourselves; and a more rigid circle of philosophers never surrounded a board.

The wine was really good, and its merits did not appear the less striking from the fact that we were not habitually wine-bibbers, our devotions generally being paid to fluids more potent or more heavy than the juice of the grape, and it soon excited our powers of conversation. Heavens? What a flow of soul! More good things were said in Jack Ginger's chambers that evening, than in the Houses of Lord and Commons in a month. We talked of everything—politics, literature, the fine arts, drama, high life, low life, the opera, the cock-pit—everything from the heavens above to the hells in St. James' street. There was not an article in a morning, evening or weekly paper for the week before, which we did not repeat. It was clear that our knowledge of things in general was drawn from these recondite sources. In politics we were harmonious, we were Tories to a man, and defied the Radicals of all classes, ranks and conditions. We deplored the ruin of our country, and breathed a sigh over the depression of the agricultural interest. We gave it as our opinion that Don Miguel should be King of Portugal, and that Don Carlos, if he had the pluck of the most nameless of insects, could ascend the throne of Spain. We pitched Louis Philippe to that place which is

never mentioned to ears polite, and drank the health of the Duchess of Berri. Opinion differed somewhat about the Emperor of Russia—some thinking he was too hard on the Poles—others gently blaming him for not squeezing them much tighter. Antony Harrison, who had seen the Grand Duke Constantine, when he was campaigning, spoke with tears in his eyes of that illustrious prince, declaring him, with an oath, to have been a d——d good fellow. As for Leopold, we unanimously voted him to be a scurvy hound; and Joe Macgillicuddy was pleased to say something complimentary of the Prince of Orange, which would have no doubt much gratified his Royal Highness, if it had been communicated to him, but I fear it never reached his ears.

Turning to domestic policy, we gave it to the Whigs in high style. If Lord Grey had been within hearing, he must instantly have resigned—he never could have resisted the thunders of our eloquence. All the hundred and one Greys would have been forgotten, he must have sunk before us. Had Brougham been there, he must have been converted to Toryism long before he could have got to the state of tipsyfication in which he sometimes addressed the House of Lords. There was not a

topic left undiscussed. With one hand we arranged Ireland, with another put the Colonies in order. Catholic Emancipation was severely condemned, and Bob Burke gave the glorious, pious and immortal memory. The vote of £20,000,000 to the greasy blacks was much reprobated, and the opening of the China trade declared a humbug. We spoke, in fact, articles that would have made the fortune of half a hundred magazines, if the Editors of those works would have had the perspicacity to insert them—and this we did with such ease to ourselves, that we never for a moment stopped the circulation of the bottle, which kept running on its round rejoicing, while we settled the affairs of the nation.

Then Antony Harrison told us all his campaigns in the Peninsular, and that capital story how he bilked the tavern-keeper in Portsmouth; Jack Ginger entertained us with an account of his transactions in the Brazils; and as Jack's imagination far outruns his attentions to matter of fact, we had them considerably improved. Bob Burke gave us all the particulars of his duel with Ensign Brady of the 48th, and how he hit him on the waistcoat pocket, which fortunately for the Ensign, contained a five shilling piece, (how he got it was never ac-

counted for,) which saved him from grim death. From Joe Macgillicuddy we heard multifarious narrations of steeple-chases in Tipperary, and of his hunting with the Blazers in Galway. Tom Meggot expatiated on his college adventures in Edinburgh, which he maintained to be a far superior city to London, and repeated sundry witty sayings of the advocates in the Parliament house, who seem to be gentlemen of great facetiousness. As for me, I emptied out all Joe Miller on the company, and if old Joe could have burst his cerements in the neighboring church of St. Clement Danes, he would have been infinitely delighted with the reception which the contents of his agreeable miscellany met with. To tell the truth, my jokes were all more known to my companions than their stories were to me. Harrison's campaigns, Ginger's cruises, Burke's duel, Macgillicuddy's steeple-chases, and Tom Meggot's rows in the High Street, had been told over and over so often, indeed, that the several relators began to believe that there is some foundation in fact for the wonders which they are continually repeating.

"I perceive this is the last bottle of port," said Jack Ginger; "so I suppose there cannot be any

harm in drinking bad luck to Antony Harrison's wine-merchant for not making it the dozen."

"Yes," said Harrison, "the skinflint thief would not stand more than the half, for which he merits the most infinite certainty of non-payment."

(You may depend upon it that Harrison was as good as his word, and treated the man of bottles according to his deserts.)

The port was gathered to its fathers, and pot-teen reigned in its stead. A most interesting discussion took place as to what was to be done with it. No doubt, indeed, existed as to its final destruction; but various opinions were broached as to the manner in which it was to make its way to its appointed end. Some wished that every man should make for himself; but that Jack Ginger strenuously opposed, because he said it would render the drinking unsteady. The company divided into two parties on the great question of bowl or jug. The Irishmen maintained the cause of the latter. Tom Meggot, who had been reared in Glasgow, and Jack Ginger, who did not forget his sailor propensities, were in favor of the former. Much erudition was displayed on both sides, and I believe I may safely say, that every topic, that either learning or exper-

ience could suggest, was exhausted. At length we called for a division, when there appeared—

<i>For the Jug:</i>	<i>For the Bowl:</i>
Bob Burke,	Jack Ginger,
Joe Macgillicuddy,	Humpy Harlow,
Antony Harrison,	Tom Meggot.
Myself.	

Majority 1, in favor of the jug. I was principally moved to vote as I did, because I deferred to the Irishmen, as persons who were best acquainted with the nature of potteen; and Antony Harrison was on the same side from former recollections of his quarterings in Ireland. Humpy Harlow said he always made it a point to side with the man of the house.

“It is settled,” said Jack Ginger, “and, as we say of Parliamentary Reform, though we opposed it, it is now law, and must be obeyed. I’ll clear away these marines, and do you, Bob Burke, make the punch. I think you will find the lemons good—the sugar superb—and the water of the Temple has been famous for centuries.”

“And I’ll back the potteen against any that ever came from the Island of Saints,” said Bob, proceed-

ing to his duty, which all who have the honor of his acquaintance will admit him to be well qualified to perform. He made it in a couple of big blue water-jugs, observing that making punch in small jugs was really as great a bother as ladling from a bowl—and as he tossed the steaming fluid from jug to jug to mix it kindly, he sang the pathetic ballad of Hugger-mofane.

I wish I had a red herring's tail, &c.

It was an agreeable picture of combined use and ornament, and reminded us strongly of the Abyssinian maid of the Platonic poetry of Coleridge.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW HUMPHY HARLOW BROKE SILENCE AT JACK GINGER'S.

HE punch being made, and the jug revolving, the conversation continued as before. But it may be observed that I have not taken any notice of the share which one of the party, Humphy Harlow, took in it. The fact is, that he had been silent for almost all the evening, being out-blazed and over-borne by the brilliancy of the conversation of his companions. We were all acknowledged wits in our respective lines, whereas he had not been endowed with the same talents. How he came among us I forget; nor did any of us know well who or what he was. Some maintained he was a dry salter in the City; others surmised that he might be a pawnbroker at the West End. Certain it is that he had some money, which perhaps might have

recommended him to us, for there was not a man in the company who had not occasionally borrowed from him a sum too trifling, in general, to permit any of us to think of repaying it. He was a broken-backed little fellow, as vain of his person as a peacock, and accordingly we always called him Humpy Harlow, with the spirit of gentlemanlike candor which characterized all our conversation. With a kind feeling towards him, we in general permitted him to pay our bills for us whenever we dined together at a tavern or chop-house, merely to gratify the little fellow's vanity, which I have already hinted to be excessive.

He had this evening made many ineffectual attempts to shine, but was at last obliged to content himself with opening his mouth for the admission, not for the utterance, of good things. He was evidently unhappy, and a rightly constituted mind could not avoid pitying his condition. As jug, however, succeeded jug, he began to recover his self-possession, and it was clear, about eleven o'clock, when the fourth bottle of potteen was converting into punch, that he had a desire to speak. We had been for some time busily employed in smoking cigars, when, all on a sudden, a

shrill and sharp voice was heard from the midst of a cloud, exclaiming in a high treble key.

"Humphries told me."

We all puffed our Havanas with the utmost silence, as if we were so many sachems at a palaver, listening to the narration which proceeded from the misty tabernacle in which Humpy Harlow was enveloped. He unfolded a tale of wondrous length, which we never interrupted. No sound was heard save that of the voice of Harlow narrating the story which had been confided by the unknown Humphries, or the gentle gliding of the jug, an occasional tingle of a glass, and the soft suspiration of the cigar. On moved the story, in its length, breadth and thickness, for Harlow gave it to us in its full dimensions. He abated it not a jot. The firmness which we displayed was unequalled since the battle of Waterloo. We sat with determined countenances, exhaling smoke, and inhaling punch, while the voice still rolled onward. At last Harlow came to an end, and a Babel of conversation burst from lips in which it had been so long imprisoned. Harlow looked proud of his feat, and obtained the thanks of the company, grateful that he had come to a conclu-

sion. How we finished the potteen—converted my bottle of rum into a bowl (for here Jack Ginger prevailed)—how Jerry Gallagher, by superhuman exertions, succeeded in raising a couple of hundred oysters for supper—how the company separated, each to get to his domicile as he could—how I found in the morning my personal liberty outraged by the hands of that unconstitutional band of gens-d’armes created for the direct purposes of tyranny, and held up to the indignation of all England by the weekly eloquence of the Dispatch—how I was introduced to the attention of a magistrate, and recorded in the dismal page of the newspaper—all this **must** be left to other historians to relate.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT STORY IT WAS THAT HUMPHY HARLOW TOLD AT JACK GINGER'S.



AT three o'clock on the day after the dinner, Antony Harrison and I found ourselves eating bread and cheese—part of the cheese—at Jack Ginger's. We recapitulated the events of the preceding evening, and expressed ourselves highly satisfied with the entertainment. Most of the good things we had said were revived, served up again, and laughed at once more. We were perfectly satisfied with the parts which we had respectively played, and talked ourselves into excessive good-humor. All on a sudden Jack Ginger's countenance clouded. He was evidently puzzled; and sat for a moment in thoughtful silence. We asked him, with Oriental simplicity of sense, "why art thou troubled?" and in a moment he answered:

"What *was* the story which Humphy Harlow told us about eleven o'clock last night, just as Bob Burke was teeming the last jug?"

"It began," said I, "with '*Humphries told me.*'"

"It did," said Antony Harrison, cutting a deep incision into the cheese.

"I know it did," said Jack Ginger, "but what was it that Humphries had told him? I cannot recollect it if I was to be made Lord Chancellor."

Antony Harrison and I mused in silence, and racked our brains, but to no purpose. On the tablet of our memories, no trace had been engraved, and the tale of Humphries, as reported by Harlow, was as if it were not, so far as we were concerned.

While we were in this perplexity, Joe Macgillcuddy and Bob Burke entered the room.

"We have just been taking a hair of the same dog," said Joe. "It was a pleasant party we had last night. Do you know what Bob and I have been talking of for the last half hour?"

We professed our inability to conjecture.

"Why then," continued Joe, "it was about the story that Harlow told last night."

"The story begins with '*Humphries told me,*'" said Bob.

"And," proceeded Joe, "for our lives we cannot recollect what it was."

"Wonderful," we all exclaimed, "how inscrutable are the movements of the human mind!"

And we proceeded to reflect on the frailty of our memories, moralizing in a strain that would have done honor to Dr. Johnson.

"Perhaps," said I, "Tom Meggot may recollect it."

Idle Hope, dispersed to the wind almost as soon as it was formed. For the words had scarcely passed the "bulwark of my teeth," when Tom appeared, looking excessively bloodshot in the eye. On inquiry, it turned out that he, like the rest of us, remembered only the cabalistic words which introduced the tale, but of the tale itself, nothing.

Tom had been educated in Edinburgh, and was as strongly attached to what he calls *metapheesicks*; and, accordingly, after rubbing his forehead, he explained—

"This is a psychological curiosity which deserves to be developed. I happen to have half a sovereign about me," (an assertion which I may remark in passing, excited considerable surprise in his audience) "and I'll ask Harlow to dine with me at the Rainbow. I'll get the story out of the humpy rascal and no mistake."

We acquiesced in the proceeding; and Antony Harrison, observing that he happened by chance to be disengaged, hooked himself on Tom, who seemed to have a sort of national antipathy to such a ceremony, with a talent and alacrity that proved him to be a veteran warrior, or what in common parlance is called an old soldier.

Tom succeeded in getting Harlow to dinner, and Harrison succeeded in making him pay the bill, to the great relief of Meggot's half-sovereign, and they parted at an early hour in the morning. The two Irishmen and myself were at Ginger's shortly after breakfast; we had been part occupied in tossing half-pence to decide which of us was to send out for ale, when Harrison and Meggot appeared. There was conscious confusion written in their countenance; "Did Humpy Harlow tell you *that* story?" we all exclaimed at once.

"It cannot be denied that he did," said Meggot, "Precisely as the clock struck eleven he began with '*Humphries told me.*'"

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, there it is," said Antony Harrison, "may I be drummed out if I can remember another word."

"Nor I," said Meggot.

The strangeness of this singular adventure made a deep impression on us all. We were sunk in silence for some minutes, during which Jerry Gallagher made his appearance with the ale, which I omitted to mention had been lost by Joe Magillcuddy. We sipped that British beverage, much abstracted in deep thought. The thing appeared to us perfectly inscrutable. At last I said, "This will never do, we cannot exist much longer in this atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty. We must have it out of Harlow to-night or there is an end of all the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent. I have credit," said I, "at the widow's in St. Martin's lane. Suppose we meet there to-night, and get Harlow there if we can?"

"That I can do," said Antony Harrison "for I quartered myself to dine with him to-day, as I saw him home, poor little fellow, last night. I promise that he figures at the widow's to-night at nine o'clock."

So we separated. At nine every man of the party was in St. Martin's Lane, seated in the little back parlor; and Harrison was as good as his word, for he brought Harlow with him. We ordered a sumptuous supper of mutton Kidneys, interspersed with sausages, and set to. At eleven o'clock pre-

cisely, the eye of Harlow brightened, and putting his pipe down, he commenced with a shrill voice.

"Humphries told me."

"Aye," said we all with one accord, "here it is, now we shall have it—take care of it this time."

"What do you mean?" said Humpy Harlow, performing that feat which by the illustrious John Reeve is called "flaring up."

"Nothing," we replied, "nothing; but we are anxious to hear that story."

"I understand you," said our broken-backed friend. "I now recollect that I did tell it once or so before in your company, but I shall not be a butt any longer for you or anybody else."

"Don't be in a passion, Humpy," said Jack Ginger.

"Sir," replied Harlow, "I hate nicknames, it is a mark of a low mind to use them—and as I see I am brought here only to be insulted, I shall not trouble you any longer with my company."

Saying this, the little man seized his hat and umbrella, and strode out of the room.

"His back is up," said Joe Macgillicuddy, "and there's no use of trying to get it down. I am sorry he is gone because I should have made him pay for another round."

But he is gone, not to return again and the story remains unknown. Yes, as undiscoverable as the hieroglyphical writings of the ancient Egyptians. It exists, to be sure, in the breast of Harlow; but there it is buried, never to emerge into the light of day. It is lost to the world, and means of recovering it, there in my opinion, exist none. The world must go on without it, and states and empires must continue to flourish and to fade without the knowledge of what it was that Humphries told Harlow. Such is the inevitable course of events.

For my part, I shall be satisfied with what I have done in drawing up this accurate and authentic narrative, if I can seriously impress upon the minds of my readers the perishable nature of mundane affairs—if I can make them reflect that even memory itself, the noblest, perhaps the characteristic, quality of the human mind will decay, even while other faculties exist—and that in the words of a celebrated Lord of Trade and Plantations of the name of John Locke," we may be like the tombs to which we are hastening, where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the imagery is defaced, and the inscription is blotted out forever."

WILLIAM MAGINN.



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